

350

HANNAH HEWIT.

ТІВН ПАНІАН

K. 3rd e
HANNAH HEWIT;

OR,

22

THE FEMALE CRUSOE.

BEING

THE HISTORY OF A WOMAN

OF

uncommon, mental, and personal accomplishments;

WHO,

After a variety of extraordinary and interesting adventures in almost every station of life, from splendid prosperity to abject adversity,

WAS CAST AWAY IN

THE GROSVENOR EAST-INDIAMAN:

And became for three years the sole inhabitant of

AN ISLAND,

IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN

BY HERSELF.

THERE IS AN ESPECIAL PROVIDENCE IN THE FALL OF A SPARROW.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. DIBDIN, AT HIS MUSIC WAREHOUSE, NO. 411, STRAND.

29

HANNAH HEWITT

THE WINDMILL & CO.

THE HISTORY OF A WOMAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A MAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A CHILD

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN



IN THE SOUTH EAST

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN

AND THE HISTORY OF A YOUNG MAN

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is particularly requested that the following Address to the Public, may not be read till after a perusal of the work itself; for, though it is not intended as a key, no such thing being necessary, it is so far a sort of elucidation, that a previous knowledge of it might serve, by anticipating some of the circumstances, to take off the edge of the reader's curiosity; which, be it as keen as it may, will often be whetted in the course of his acquaintance with Hannah Hewit.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE Readers of Hannah Hewit, having been requested to suppose that her life was written by herself, are now entreated to go on and suppose a little more; and first, that her brother, Captain Higgins, to whom Hewit's chest was given in care, was shipwrecked and lost, in his passage home, on one of the Scilly Islands; and that the cargo and different effects of the *Dane*, and of course Hewit's chest, fell a prey to the fishermen, smugglers, and other uncivilized boors who inhabit those islands.

Let me then intrude for a further supposition that Hewit's chest, having been thrown among some lumber in a cellar, was discovered, eight years afterwards, by a Grub-street Poet; who, tired out by a long series of literary disappointments, turned misanthrope, and went to reside in that obscure part of the world.

This supposed, permit me to make interest for one more supposition, that by some circuitous route, no matter what, the whole of these materials came into my possession; that I found them a large, loose, indigested

mas; that I seperated, methodized, and regulated them, and that they are now given to the public in that form which I thought would be most acceptable.

These suppositions, let me tell the reader, are not amiss: First, if Captain Higgins, notwithstanding his boasted security and implicit reliance on the wind, was cast away, what cause would there be to admire the prescience of Hannah Hewit, who warned him against taking the voyage, and actually prevailed on seven other persons to stay with her, thereby saving their lives.

Next, the supposition that Hewit's chest, filled with manuscripts, should be thrown about like lumber among a set of people who could not read, is really neat enough; and, again, it is not only ingenious to say an author should be the first to rescue them from oblivion, but it is fairly in point, being poor, that he should wish to get something by them. The only wonder is, that he did not pass them for his own; except, indeed, we believe that they are his invention, and that, as lady writing is now very fashionable, he thought it his interest to foist them upon Hannah, but this last will not do, for it knocks up the other suppositions.

The last supposition, that this work, by some means or other, came into my hands, is not to be so easily cleared;

for, account for it how I may, it is impossible that I should every where gain credit. My readers, therefore, for I hope there will be a great many, and I am sure they will all be candid and kind, having so handsomely indulged me with several suppositions for my accommodation, are respectfully requested, on this subject, to add a supposition for themselves.

In the mean time I shall speak of this work as if I expected implicit belief that it was found in Hewit's chest, not that I mean to say, I ever saw Hewit's chest, for that would be as times go, rather too ticklish an assertion. No, no, I only speak of the manuscripts. The chest was left as a memento on the Scilly Island; which undoubted fact, if this history were of consequence enough to make such a stir about it, I could procure to be authenticated by the signatures of the parson, and churchwardens, and the marks of the overseers, and half the inhabitants.

But I am afraid I am wrong; and by appearing so anxious to establish this fact, like the old woman who swept the dust about the house till she lost it, it will be suspected of being no fact at all. I shall, therefore, take bolder ground and say, that so far from not being possible, the thing is very likely.

Don't we know that Don Quixote, instead of being written by Cervantes, was found, and I believe in a chest, among the writings of Cid Hamet Benanjulo? Were not, to our certain knowledge, the entire works of Aristotle, as I had occasion largely to illustrate in the Preface to my other Novel, buried in the earth for two hundred and seventy years, and afterwards known to be genuine?

Will any body, after this, tell me that I need make myself uneasy, that such a trifling work should have been found in a chest only eight years after it was deposited there? And in what chest too? A seaman's chest. What is a seaman without his chest? What so likely to be found after a shipwreck? Where is it more probable that a ship should be wrecked than on the Scilly Islands? For my part I think it would be impertinence to offer another proof.

Let it, however, be remembered, that the pains I have taken have been solely on my own account. I have no wish in this business to get into any public controversy: 'Let every tub,' or rather chest, 'stand upon its own bottom.' I cannot help, however, confessing that it will be an unspeakable satisfaction to me to find that in elucidating the truth of my own argument, I shall have been

fortunate enough to establish and confirm the world's belief of any similar fact ; or, which expression is, I believe, more fashionable—*Fac simile*.

Having now so positively proved how this history was found, I shall go on to shew, first, the probability of its having been written by Hannah Hewit, and, secondly, how far as to its circumstances it is entitled to implicit credit from the public.

As to the first consideration—If Hannah Hewit did not write this book, will the reader have the kindness to tell me who did ? This, I think, is unanswerable. Indeed, who but she could have given so minute and particular an account of all that happened, both before and during the time she was secluded from the world. Who could have broached her opinions, explained her resources, or entered, as it were, into the recesses of her heart, but herself.

There is a vein all the way through, I will not say of egotism, for Hannah was above being tainted with vanity, but of that laudable ambition, which all men and women too entertain, to set up in their own example, a model for the world's imitation : and which cannot be given in co-

lours so glowing from the pen of any other as the person by whom it is felt.

I believe it will be given me, that this propensity prevails throughout human nature ; and that there is no regular system, be it cock fighting, love, eating, reform, swearing, dressing, bawling, simpering, lounging, back-biting, or whatever else may happen to be the reigning pleasure or business of the moment, but some son or daughter of creation is emulous to hold out as a worthy example to his or her fellow creatures.

If Hannah could have had a foible, I think it would have been this : Her intellects were strong, her invention prompt, and her conclusions sound and just. Added to exquisite feminine susceptibility, she had a male mind. In short, she had those requisites without which no female can be absolutely a writer ; and if these deceived her into an opinion that a moral application would be made of her work, and that under the idea of doing good for evil, she should do a great deal to please a world that had done a great deal to vex her, the error will, of course, be pardoned in favour of the intention.

Having as completely proved that Hannah wrote her

own life, as that it was found in Hewit's chest, I shall go into the probability of its being authentic ; and, then, after a few conclusive remarks, take my leave of the reader.

As to the authenticity of this work for my own part, were I not so situated as to be under the necessity of speaking to it in some degree, I should be wholly silent ; for whenever I take up a book, so the matter is entertaining, and the sentiments are just, it is perfectly indifferent to me whether they are conveyed through the medium of fact or fiction ; and as to the present subject, having never, to the best of my recollection, seen any more of Mrs. Hewit than of her husband's chest, it would not only be propostorous folly, but an insult to the public, which no Hannah Hewit shall ever catch me at, were I to pledge myself to the literal truth of a single iota throughout the whole business.

I am, nevertheless, strongly inclined to believe that this history is, at least, essentially true : for there are many of the circumstances, the similitude of which I recognize correctly, and I should be very apt to pin an implicit faith upon the whole exactly as it is here set down, were it not that these persons, and these circumstances, are cut out now and then and fitted so as to answer a judicious pur-

pose, instead of being suffered to stand in their original character and form.

For instance, I once knew a man so extremely like Sourby, that I defy Hannah Hewit to bring forward any plan of domestic ruin her Sourby ever meditated, but I'll match with one fabricated by mine. Indeed I should fancy them one and the same person, if it was not that her Sourby was swallowed by a shark, whereas I met mine the other day lolling in his chariot,

The conduct of every nefarious lawyer is so alike, that it is not wonderful, having, as Walmesley would have said, seen some desperate service, that I should know the exact representative of Lawyer Higgins. The fact is, one trifling difference excepted, I could point at the man, which difference is only this, that Hannah's lawyer was hanged at Tyburn, whereas mine is not hanged yet.

By circumstances like these I am now and then given to believe that in the fulness of her zeal, Hannah sometimes bounced, that is to say, poetically, and she was right; for, if it be true, which it is, and a lamentable consideration into the bargain, that vice is seldomer punished than moral justice requires, it is fairly the business of the poet, occasionally, to call in a shark, or a halter,

that a literary work may go into the world not only to encourage the virtues of the good, but to gnaw and choke the consciences of the bad.

But to continue my examination. I knew the man and have a good reason to remember him, who under the title of Captain Higgins, performed that exploit in the Britannia, and afterwards commanded the Eagle: all which, as well as the Vigo business, his being cheated by his merchants, his going to the Fleet, and afterwards to India, and many other things are to my knowledge literally true.

If it were necessary; I might next go into the good natured thoughtlessness of Walmesley, the weakness that perpetually betrayed Hewit into indiscretion, the unaffected manliness of Binns, and the fine mind of young Hewit, and say that I virtually knew every one of them; for though I have been pretty roughly treated in the world as well as Hanah, I have still a pleasure and a willingness to confess that such characters are to be found. The misfortune is, that being, in the garden of life, though a very beautiful, yet a very humble plant, they are so choked up, and trampled upon, that it requires both sound judgment and keen penetration to discover them; and, even then, they are so warped and distorted, that

they seldom display their native sweetness and beauty, except when nurtured in the shades of obscurity.

These observations may serve to convince the reader that the characters are drawn in the spirit of truth. It will be only necessary, therefore, to see whether the incidents in this history are brought about by probable means, which I shall certainly not shrink from; but it must appear reasonable to any one that I ought here to have a large latitude. If circumstances arise from others which, though they are in their nature improbable, we actually know may and do occasionally happen, the ground of those circumstances being strong, the circumstances will be strong also.

For instance, when a ship is underweigh, upon ever so long, or ever so hazardous a voyage, how infinite the odds are that she is not cast away, therefore a shipwreck is a very improbable thing; but we know that ships have been cast away, and that the Grosvenor East India-man was one of them; and we also know that the crew and passengers suffered unheard of hardships. This is one of the strong consequences I allude to, which, though not *prima facie*, a probability, is both as probable and as natural a consequence as the commonest deduction from the commonest cause.

It is upon this principle that I would guard the reader from fancying, that though upon the first blush there may appear something of the extravaganza in this work, there is nothing of the marvellous; and though I shall take but little time in doing so, I don't despair of bringing home to the conviction of the reader a broad and liberal probability, even to the same degree that I believe it myself, that the work, as I said before, is essentially true.

It must be remembered, that I advertised this work as the history of a woman of uncommon, mental and personal accomplishments. The latter the reader has a better right to credit than ever reader had to credit the beauty of any heroine yet recorded; for, though a woman, and writing her own history, she does not at any one time tell you whether she was tall, or short, or fair, or brown, whether her favourite mode of doing execution was by an ogle, a smile, a sigh, a kiss, a pat, a loll, a leer, or a trip, but leaves for proof the force of her charms to the impression they made on her various admirers, from Sourby to the monkies. The word uncommon is, therefore, the most proper epithet I could have chosen.

But if Hannah is silent on her personal accomplishments, she pays it off by describing those of her mind, even to minutie; not, however, that she would have done this

had it not been positively necessary, for let an indifferent person take up the meanest article made by the meanest artizan, and, but that it is customary to see such articles constantly before his eyes, he would think it was performed by miracle. Her difficulty, therefore, was to prove that one person could do so much, but I can, in my mind, very easily get over this.

The principle of every thing is almost exactly alike, and the comprehension that can clearly and correctly admit this in one instance, will, by perseverance, find little difficulty to admit it in every instance. Thus the principle learnt, an active mind has nothing to do but to fashion and vary it, and every thing in time may be accomplished, especially with those who have strength of conception enough to teach themselves.

I will illustrate this, for I cannot make out my position too forcibly, by a very extraordinary instance. When I was in Beverly, in Yorkshire, I enquired for a person to tune a piano forte, I was told that the organist was out of town, but they could send for Quiz. Being the first time I ever heard the word, and I would not lay a wager that it was not its origin, I was curious to know who they meant by Quiz, when I learnt that the person in question was a journeyman taylor, of the name of Oliver,

who had occasionally worked at every sort of business, till at last having been captivated by music, like the man who was determined to learn Boyer's dictionary by heart, by way of teaching himself French, he thought he should get at the whole science of music through the medium of tuning piano fortes.

I found Quiz a much more extraordinary creature than he was described, for I was curious, and he was communicative; without knowing any thing systematically, it is astonishing what conclusions he had formed by going over again and again the different distances necessary for tuning an instrument; and then every thing he used he had made himself. Not having money enough to buy a tuning hammer, he actually took the stand of his goose to a blacksmith's shop and shaped one out of it, which I saw, and it answered the purpose even better than tuning hammers in general.

But this is nothing. Two or three patents had been procured for inventions of his suggestion. One was for clothing of death-head buttons, a machine for the performance of which having seen that cloathed four buttons at a time, he made the man a model for one that would cloath forty, who took this friendly advantage of the poor fellow's ingenuity. In short, there is nothing in

mechanics that he could not have undertaken with success; and had he been in the situation of Hannah Hewit, I have no doubt but he could have accomplished every thing she accomplished, and yet he was in every other respect illiterate and uninformed, what wonder then that she should do all she tells us, who possessed so many superior advantages.

The astonishing ingenuity of Hannah Hewit being completely got over, I shall now examine the incidents in her history, and, first, I believe, it will be allowed me that there is nothing in the three first books that bears the slightest hue of improbability. I shall, however, mention the business of her predicting the fate of France, because it will be said by those who, let me take what pains I may will still believe this book to be my invention, 'that it is easy to prophecy a thing after it has happened.' To all such I answer, that if I could myself have predicted the fate of France nineteen years ago, why could not Hannah Hewit? **Nay, I did predict it.** So, no doubt, did the Duke of Dorset, so did Count Dillon, whose reputations were stained by the insidious whispers of that monster D'Orleans.

So I am sure did the Emperor. He would never have refused to marry a woman who in her death proved herself an honour to her sex, and to human nature, had

he not feared that by a closer alliance with France, he should intail misery on his own subjects. While they went no further, than wearing cloaths the colour of the Queen's hair, he considered it as gallantry and a compliment to his amiable sister, but when they wore the Emperor's eyes, he began to look about him.

In short, he came determined to know the character of the French thoroughly; for this he came incog, for this he mixed with every order of the people, and by this he so completely discovered a spirit of revolt, hid like a smothered spark, throughout the kingdom, that as an instance of it, when he was at Nanci, in Lorraine, had he hinted such a wish, they would once more have cut off that province from France, and hailed him its Prince.

Every thing, after the Grosvenor was cast away, will of course be found of that extraordinary kind, which extraordinary exigencies seem to justify. Hannah's hardships, which like Camomile, or Anteus, she resisted in proportion as she was oppressed, will easily be admitted. Even the shark, though I treated it with pleasantry, by no means outrages probability; and as to the lion, to those, whose convictions have not yielded to the many instances Hannah herself has adduced, I shall only say, that there is at this moment in the Tower, a tyger, a

creature of a much more ferocious nature than the lion, that was the playfellow of a midshipman all the way from India.

Hannah's escape from the lions is also reconcilable enough; and, though many similar instances may not have occurred, there are not wanting some to bear us out. Father Philip Dechauffe, a carmelite, relates a circumstance still more extraordinary: A Portugese sailing in the *Bange*, an Oriental river, went ashore to enjoy the beauty of the place. He had scarcely walked many paces when a frightful crocodile appeared ready to devour him. He instantly recoiled and measured his way back again as fast as possible; and, just as he seemed in safety from the jaws of the crocodile, a famished tyger made a spring at him, when avoiding him by a providential inclination of his body, the tyger passed over the traveller with such force that he fell into the jaws of the crocodile, and became its prey.

But I am got into such length that I cannot now stop at trifles. I shall, therefore, leaving every thing else to the candour of the reader, go to Hannah's winding up the whole, which I beg once more to be pardoned for calling her living apotheosis, and yet I cannot see how I could have used a weaker term. I dare say every one of her hearers, felt her words like the inspiration

of a deity, how much more then would those words have borne that resemblance, could any one have whispered that they were a warning to save eight such friends, as, surely, never met together but upon that island, from destruction.

Thus I have troubled the reader with such a clue as I flatter myself will serve to shew how this book was found, by whom it was written, and that the circumstances it contains are within the scope of probability; and I would not have any one fancy, upon the faith of my having omitted any thing, that I have not enough to say, if ever the probability of the circumstance should be attacked. Most of the difficult things I know to be practicable, and have no doubt but I can prove it by time, place, and person; therefore, before any caviler thinks proper to indulge a different opinion, I would have him look to the validity of his own-experience, and not pronounce a thing impossible, merely because his ability is not equal to the task.

And now, if this work should become popular, and the persons concerned in it attract public curiosity; as it is ten years since Captain Higgins left the island, and, therefore, the probability, I like the word, is that there are, by this time, plenty of young Hewits, Higginses, and Walmesleys. I do not think it would be

amids, only it would be a pity to disturb them, if some ship on a discovery were to try all the Comora Islands round, till they met with Hannah's Eden; in which case we might not only hear what they were about, but establish a sort of place of call for the India ships like the Cape of Good Hope and St. Helena; besides, in that case, Hannah might have the satisfaction, both of reading her life in print, according to Captain Higgins's words, and also of learning the fate of that relation whom she so much valued, and for whom she so much feared; which considerations again would bind the little commonwealth of Edenites with a fresh degree of satisfaction to their resolution of remaining in their Paradise.

All this, however, I leave to the public, assuring them, that if any more of Hannah's writings should be discovered, and deposited with me, I shall lend my helping hand to usher them into the world, with the same fidelity which I have made my ground of conduct in the present instance. I would, however, recommend a caution, this being a notable age for literary discoveries, lest they should be imposed upon by some spurious Hannah Hewit; and, so advising, that my hint may not be thrown away, and begging pardon for this long intrusion, I shall finish in the true advertising strain, and say, beware of counterfeits, for such are abroad.

HANNAH HEWIT.

BOOK I.

CONTAINING THE JUVENILE ADVENTURES OF HANNAH HEWIT.

CHAP. I.

IN WHICH, AFTER A MODEST APOLOGY, THE SUBJECT OF THESE ADVENTURES RELATES A TRAIN OF CIRCUMSTANCES THAT THREW HER EARLY UPON THE WORLD.

HEAVEN only knows whether these particulars will ever be made public; but, as they contain the history of a harmless and inoffensive individual, whose life has been chequered by a train of extraordinary events; as they shew the firmness, and vi-

gour, with which providence vouchsafes to endow the human mind in proportion to its various trials; and, above all, as it proves in every line the indulgent, and benevolent care with which our all merciful Creator is graciously pleased to watch and protect the meanest of his creatures; so I think it my duty to trust these sheets to chance, in hopes, through one of those unforeseen accidents, by which men are permitted to wonder and admire, many a fair eye, and many a manly heart, may pay a tribute of sympathy to the memory of Hannah Hewit.

I was born May 10, 1744, in one of those cottages, which are scattered through that well known spot called Coalbrook Dale. My father, whose name was Higgins, worked occasionally in the coal-mines, assisted in burning coke, extracting iron from ore, and polishing cylinders; he was an honest man, and contrived, with the assistance of my mother, who spun

worsted, and knit stockings, to keep six children, a bed-ridden aunt, and my mother's brother, who had been three years deaf and blind in consequence of an explosion in a coal-mine: at which time several persons were crushed to death; and, among the rest, my brother Peter, who was three years older than I.

Never was a family so marked by misfortune as mine. When I was only five years old I lost my father, my mother, and brother, and sister, in the following extraordinary manner. My father had killed a large bacon hog, and was preparing to finge it, at which ceremony my mother, and such of the children as were able, assisted. Indeed it was a feast to us, hogs puddings, and chitterlings, being dainties we could not get every day. While we were thus busily employed, we observed an uncommon light in the little hovel that served us for a habitation. It was occasioned by my little brother, who had put

straw under his sister's cradle, a child of six months old, and set it on fire to singe her in imitation of my father, who was singeing the hog. My father, who divined the cause, flew like lightning into the house, and being exasperated at my brother, who was dancing round the cradle all in flames, struck at him, as he thought, with his hand, but it unfortunately contained the fatal knife with which he had killed the hog. The moment he discovered what he had done, he raved and screamed out—‘ That he had killed his child ! ’ Then, full of distraction, ran to throw himself into the Severn. My mother, now roused from that stupefaction into which she had been thrown, followed him with such expedition, that she caught hold of him as he reached the margin of the river. Neither force, nor entreaty could prevail on him to abandon his desperate resolution. She struggled with him, but in vain ; ’till, at length, his strength being superior to her’s, as she would not let go her hold, they both fell in and were drowned.

Young as I was, I shall never forget the impression this awful scene made on my tender mind; and, as if providence, whose daughter I am, and whose care I have always been, had determined to arm me with proper fortitude for my alarming situation, and vigour to support through life the various misfortunes I was born to encounter, my reflections became firm, and decisive, and I was no longer a child from that moment.

The unhappy condition of those of my family that remained, excited the pity of my father's employer, and we were, by his interest, admitted into the workhouse. I had learnt to spin long before this; but, here, I learnt to read, and write; which so employed my mind, that I was never so happy as when I was improving myself. This extraordinary industry and application attracted the notice of the vicar, a venerable and most amiable man, of whom I shall have frequent occasion to speak.

I owe to him those sentiments that have been the comfort, and consolation of my life. His name was Williams; and, if he be alive, and should read this, he will have fresh occasion to commend me for observing his lessons which, though my life has been unfortunate, has kept it irreproachable.

As soon as I had perfected myself in one thing, I learnt another, and there was no trade practised in the workhouse that I had not some notion of. Reading and writing, however, were, at that time, the greatest pleasures of my life; and to those employments I devoted all my leisure hours; but what begat in me the greatest emulation was reading those works written by my own sex; who, I confess, I secretly envied, and devoutly wished that, in time, I might aspire to the enviable distinction of being considered as a female writer, little divining so fatal a propensity would only be gratified by recording, upon the

leaves of a tree, in an uninhabited island, the sad vicissitudes of my unfortunate life.

This desire was considerably encreased by the success that attended Mr. Williams's daughter, a young lady of uncommon talents, and a prodigy of learning. Her poems were read with admiration, and she was considered as the best lady writer since Sapho. To be sure she wrote a play, which did not succeed, but this was attributed to its having been written with strict decency, a circumstance often neglected I must confess; but, I hope, for the honour of my sex, that when their writings verge towards obscenity, 'tis not because that style is natural, or habitual to them, but because it is necessary to write indelicately to please an indelicate age.

In this, however, Miss Williams, whose christian name was Margery, considered less her fame, than her honour; and, I flatter myself, I have so well profitted by

her example, that though I may have, in the course of this work, many strong circumstances to relate, no one will be able to accuse me of suffusing the check of modesty with a blush.

In addition to the smattering of literature I picked up at over hours, which I employed in whatever industry I was set about at the Vicar's, I studied, superficially, all those accomplishments which Miss Williams possessed in so perfect a degree; so that, what between the workhouse and the Vicar's, before I was ten years old, I could spin, knit, knot, sew, stitch, darn, make gloves, mend shoes, do rush, straw, and cane work; write, draw, point a hobnail, and play upon the guitar.

But now a much larger field for the exercise of my talents was opened to me. A considerable manufacturer, at Wolverhampton, having dined at the Vicar's, and taken notice not only of the adroitness

with which I had, under the tuition of Miss Margery Williams, set about painting a firescreen, but the improvements I had suggested to the carpenter, as to the principle on which he had mounted it, declared, from what he saw, I should be of infinite service in the japanning line, into which employ it is very common to take girls from the workhouse.

My benefactor caught at this suggestion, and to be brief, for this is a part of my history that I ought to compress into as narrow a compass as possible, in less than six weeks I was bound apprentice to Mr. Smallbrook, who every body must remember as an eminent manufacturer in the japan line at Wolverhampton.

My employ was to paint birds, beasts, butterflies, fruit, and landscapes, upon urns, tea boards, bread-baskets, and toilette boxes; and I have no doubt but many of my fair readers may be induced, from this

passage, to wish that some commode, pin-case, or patch-box, in their possession, may be of my painting. Certainly, if such a fact could be ascertained, many a trifle that has passed these hands might, from the singular circumstances of my strange fortune, be considered in as curious and valuable a light as the mould of a queen Elizabeth's farthing, or the feathers upon the wing of the hunch-back beetle.

To such as are desirous of knowing whether they are in possession of any vestige of those toys, and utensils, which, from 1757, to 1764, were principally suggested by me, and which have rendered so celebrated the manufactory of Pontipool; I shall hold out a clue to discover the truth. If the subject be a shepherdes getting over a stile, and unconsciously betraying the symetry of a well turned leg to a concealed shepherd, or, as its companion, a Strephon plunging into a transparent brook, and buffetting aside the yielding

waves with his sinewy limbs, while his enamoured Daphne, her lamb by her side, stands fascinated as she peeps through the umbrage of a close enwoven wood, the design is sure to be mine, and, perhaps, the execution.

The last subject, even at this distance of time, forces tears into my eyes, for it brings to my recollection that fatal day I fell in love with John Hewit, the author of all my pains and pleasures; the only difference in the situation of the picture is, that I was varnishing a plate-warmer in the garret, with a cat upon my shoulder, and he was tinning a saucepan in the smithy.

This circumstance of the cat is extremely well worth attending to, and I am particularly pleased, that my noticing it here gives me an opportunity of recollecting that I must have had an extraordinary consideration and respect for the unfortunate at my time of life; for I per-

fectly well remember, that my partiality to cats arose from their being an animal that all the world persecuted: I will confess that, being a female, and fond of erudition, I had some uneasy moments lest my predelection for tabbies might be the means of my becoming an old maid; but, having seen John Hewit, I grew perfectly easy on that head.

I need not apologize, in this place, to the intelligent reader, who knows that the minutest circumstances are of consequence in an extraordinary and complicate history like mine; and I may, perhaps, have, hereafter, reason to remark that providence permitted this very prepossession, singular and almost ludicrous as it was, to inspire me with a desire of soliciting a protection to which I at this moment owe the preservation of my life and my honour—but of that in its place.

CHAP. II.

SOME REMARKS ON THE FORCE OF DESTINY, AND
AN ACCOUNT OF JOHN HEWIT, AND HIS TWO
MALE FRIENDS.

THE variety of occupations followed at Wolverhampton, coming in contact with a mind thirsting after improvement, and fertile in invention, like mine, no wonder if my progress, as an artist and a mechanic, was remarkable. No ingenious device, elegant form, or tasty invention, was put into hand 'till I was consulted. At length my judgment and opinion became so celebrated, that, before I was fifteen, my abilities were considered as equal to a fortune, and I might have made my choice among the most opulent at Wolverhampton.

Destiny, however, which all must obey, an observation that never was more truly verified than in my wayward fortune, ordained otherwise. John Hewit, though a man of indifferent character, bad connections, low conversation, and only an apprentice to a tinman; why, or wherefore, I did not know, won my heart in spite of me; and, for him, I rejected with disdain the most eligible offers.

Were I to avail myself of my privilege as a writer, I might defend my conduct upon various principles; but, as I am writing a life, and not a controversy, I shall only speak of myself as a woman, and say that, though my conduct was madness, I could not have courage to argue with the impulse I felt; and, therefore, yielded to what I knew would make me miserable.

To account for my partiality to the object of my affections, his exclusive possession

of my heart, to the discomfiture of so many plate-harners, button, buckle, and thimble-makers, for the rancour, scandal, and slander of all the Wolverhampton females; and, in short, for that discontent to others, and misery to myself, which I caused in my implicit obedience to my destiny; I shall only say, that whatever he might be in other respects, John Hewit was the handsomest man eyes ever beheld.

That I may not, however, lay under the imputation of sensuality, I had many other motives for this conduct. In the first place, he had a vile character; and with what pleasure did I contemplate the glory I should reap in reclaiming him.— Then he was illiterate, uninformed, and brutal; and how could I employ the information I had picked up better than in instructing, polishing, and civilizing him? Could I have a properer opportunity to put into active practice that beneficence and

philanthropy I had learnt from the Vicar and his daughter? To oblige any fellow-creature, is a satisfaction to a heart like mine, but to oblige a handsome man, and one whom fate destined for her husband, is surely the most brilliant trait that ever complimented the discernment and mind of a female.

John Hewit was the son of a cow-driver, near Shefnal. His father had the misfortune to be tried and convicted of a highway robbery; but as every body knew he was not guilty of the theft, which, beyond a doubt, was committed by the son of a rich grazier in the neighbourhood, the jury, and, in particular, the father of the thief, who was one of them, recommended him to mercy, in consequence of which he was only transported for life.

The family of old Hewit, consisting of a wife and three children, of whom John was the eldest, were now obliged to shift

for themselves; and John, being admired for his beauty by the wife of a farrier, who, besides, had a regard for his mother; he was employed, being thirteen years old, to hold the horses, and to do whatever else he could to render himself useful.

Though this farrier was very like Vulcan, being lame, brutal, and a blacksmith; I cannot say his good dame, in the smallest degree, bore a resemblance to Venus, except in her passion for Adonis, whose perfect resemblance, as far as description goes, she certainly had in her house, and Fame does them both injustice, or the resemblance of their amour was also realized, for the farrier, before John was fifteen, became such a nay-word that he turned him away, but not 'till he had purloined a ring and a watch, which circumstance the good lady did not think proper to impart to her husband.

After this he rambled about with some

gipsies, and took one short trip to sea. At last good Parson Williams, who was the constant friend of distress, and who, indeed, had been instrumental in saving the life of John's father, undertook, out of pity to his mother, to put him out apprentice.

Being heartily tired of his rambles, he took to his business pretty well; and for two years his master was perfectly satisfied with him; but, as folly is a combustible in which the smallest spark will easily cause an explosion, so the notice that was taken of him, for being now upwards of seventeen, he went by the name of the handsome Tinman, puffed up his vanity to such a degree, that he began to be fully convinced he should make his fortune by means of his person.

In this preposterous idea he was encouraged by his companions, with whom he was perpetually in the company of

loose women. Among these companions was one called Thomas Sourby, a name I have reason enough to curse. This man had ruined the principles of many young men, and young women too, in the neighbourhood, a matter of no great difficulty in a manufacturing place, where so many males and females of all ages and complexions promiscuously work together.

He had such consummate art, and such a perfect knowledge of mankind, that he made them subservient to his pleasures and convenience, under an idea of teaching them how to go through the world : and was so adroit in his business, that whenever he did amiss, somebody else was suspected ; and whenever others did what was praise worthy, he was sure to arrogate all the credit. If any one was protected from a thief, or their goods saved out of a fire, though he came, perhaps, after the danger was over, he so managed it that he was considered as the sole instrument

of their preservation; and, on the contrary, if he wired twenty hares, the suspicion lay upon somebody else.

It is singular, however, that nothing could be so obvious as his real character, and yet nobody saw it. He had no employ, no fortune, no means, yet he was always flush of money. He was arrogant, ignorant, and presuming, yet every body listened to his advice. Every body despised him, every body feared him, and every body courted him.

I divined him, to my misfortune, in a moment. His whole conduct consisted but of three qualities, which qualities, whoever, has the unmerciful courage to practise, however despicable they may appear in the eyes of men of intrinsic merit, will, with the generality of the world, be loaded with careffes.

These qualities were, penetration to

discover the follies of others, impudence to defend your own, and want of feeling to take advantage of both. No man ever possessed these diabolical qualities in a stronger degree than Thomas Sourby; and, of course, no man could be more calculated to wind round his finger such an easy, vain, credulous creature as John Hewit.

There was another young man at Wolverhampton, whose name was William Binns. He was exactly the reverse of Sourby, his heart being as good as the other's was wicked; and, indeed, they were not only marked by contrary sentiments, but contrary fortunes: Sourby living at random, nobody knew how, and Binns being established as an active partner with Mr. Gregory, his half uncle, a respectable and flourishing manufacturer.

This partnership arose from the following circumstance:

Mr. Gregory had a brother, who was many years his partner upon mutual shares; this brother died, and left his proportion of the concern to his widow, whose maiden name was Binns. She had an idle brother, who, after lavishing away what his parents could afford him, and losing many good opportunities of establishing himself, at last forfeited the good opinion of his relations, was discarded, and, rather than starve, got an employment, something similar to that of my father, in Coalbrook Dale.

There he married a poor but industrious woman, who brought him several children, and behaved so well to him, that he grew more sober, and discreet. This induced his sister, the widow, to consider him again as her brother; but as low company was his delight, and, indeed, he was not by nature calculated for any liberal, or ingenious pursuit, she contented herself with eking out his pittance with a small

annuity; and, in other respects, contributing at times to his comfort and convenience. She was, also, often heard to declare, she should remember his children in her will, and when he should have a boy grown to a proper age, she would take care of his education, and bring him up in the business in which she yet retained her share, as she was very anxious to keep up the name of Binns.

The unhappy wife of this man fell a victim among others, to that explosion of a coal-mine, in which, as I have already mentioned, my uncle was so materially hurt, and my poor little brother killed. After her loss the husband relapsed into his former irregularities. His sister, however, still commiserated his situation, and took his children, now reduced to two, a boy, and a girl, under her protection; and though she would not openly countenance him, prevailed on the beneficent Parson

Williams secretly to administer to his necessities.

She afterwards died, and left her property between her nephew and niece. The first of whom, the very Binns I am speaking of, became Mr. Gregory's partner, and the latter, a very sweet girl, managed the house.

Binns, who was acquainted with Hewit, took a great deal of trouble to shew him the absurdity of his conduct, and, of course, got affronted for his pains. This, however, did not check him. He returned to the charge, and persevered till, at last, he shewed John so strongly the folly of counting upon personal advantages with an uncultivated mind, that he, really began to feel a little right pride for the first time; and, I own, my wish to complete such a meritorious work, originated from receiving this information.

CHAP. III.

AN ACCOUNT OF JOHN HEWIT'S TWO FEMALE FRIENDS, AND A MOST POWERFUL INSTANCE OF THE DREADFUL EFFECTS OF INDISCRETION.

ABOUT this time an affair happened that became a town talk. One Jenny Rhodes, a forry huffey who worked in a large button manufactory, proved with child; and though her connections with the young men in the place were certainly very promiscuous, she determined to swear the child to John Hewit, not because there was a greater probability of his being the father than several others, but because he had slighted her for one Susan Wingrove, another Wolverhampton girl, who also bore a bad character.

This last mentioned girl convinced that, if the other had not taken a false oath, she had at least sworn very hard, levelled a whole volley of abuse at her as she came from her examination before the justice.

She reiterated the names of all those to whom Jenny Rhodes had shewn her favours, and pointed out plainly, by circumstances, to the satisfaction of a surrounding mob, who were wonderfully entertained at this curious scene, the great improbability of John's being the father of the child.

It has been remarked, that there is nothing which a disappointed woman will not meditate, and so it happened in the present instance; for being thus exposed and laughed at, this wretch conceived the most horrid design that ever entered a subtle head, or was conceived by a vile heart. She knew that John Hewit was to meet

this Susan Wingrove that evening, in a walk, about a mile from the town, called Love-lane. There she concealed herself; and watching an opportunity, favourable for her purpose, that is to say, at the very moment John was crossing over a stile, and could not see what passed in the lane, she rushed upon this poor wretch, plunged a knife into her bosom, and instantly escaped.

When Hewit came to the spot where he was to meet this girl, he found her weltering in her blood. She seemed to have some signs of life, but could not speak. While he stood in a state of distraction, wishing to administer relief to her, and not knowing in what manner, he saw Sourby at a distance, who, summoned by a loud hollow, came up and seemed extremely shocked at the dreadful spectacle before him. He shrugged, and called it a strange business, but said, that it was proper, nevertheless, out of charity, to

convey the poor creature to some place where she might be taken care of.

She was received into a neighbouring cottage, and a surgeon sent for. In the mean time a thousand enquiries went forward, as to how this murder came about. John told very artlessly, but with great contradiction and embarrassment, all he knew; and, upon the whole, so satisfied his hearers, that, except a few doubts, which took their birth from his perplexity, it was universally believed to be self-murder, which, Sourby, taking Hewit by the hand, said, 'he sincerely believed, for he had so good an opinion of his friend, that he was sure he was incapable of perpetrating so atrocious an act.'

In the mean time, by some means or other, the whole town had rung with the news, that John Hewit had killed Susan Wingrove; and the surgeon had scarcely searched her wound, and pronounced that it was mortal, and she must infallibly die,

when Binns, who from circumstances, perhaps, had seen more of the real truth than any other did, or chose to see, pulled him aside, and told him to lose no time in making his escape, for that there was a warrant against him for murder.

Hewit ever tainted with that cowardice that attends weak minds, took his friends advice and slipped away; and now, first arrived the mistress of the cottage, who said the poor creature could speak, and the only word she had uttered was 'Hewit.' Next it was discovered, that Hewit had run away, for which they blamed one another all round, and last, arrived the constables to take him up.

Let every young man, who reads this passage, take warning by it, and shun bad women as he would shun inevitable destruction, for it is a road to perdition, in which, tread as cautiously as he will, he is in danger of perishing at every step. As

soon as the poor wretch could speak, she did, indeed, pronounce the name of Hewit, as the good woman of the cottage had informed her neighbours; but had she staid five minutes longer in the room, she would have heard her acquit him of the crime, and accuse Jenny Rhodes.

A hue and cry was now made after Jenny Rhodes, but the constables, who are not remarkable for vigilance either at Wolverhamton, or elsewhere, were again at fault; for when they arrived at her habitation, she had also made her escape.

The public conversation turned variously upon the subject. Some would have it that Hewit was the murderer, and that the girl, out of affection to her lover, and hatred to her rival, had accused her, and acquitted him. Others insisted that it must have been Jenny Rhodes, who was known to be a wicked hussy, adding, that it was very unlikely the poor dying young

creature would tell a lie with her last breath; and others, again, very sagacionfly remarked, that they must both have had a hand in it, for that both had ran away. Those words, however, were not her last, nor was the surgeon's judgment so infallible as he had pronounced it, for she soon grew better, and in six weeks got perfectly well.

Jenny Rhodes, as soon as she heard that Susan Wingrove was out of danger, returned; and as she could not be tried for murder, made no scruple to declare that she had given the wound to get rid of them both, for that Hewit was the only man she ever loved, and finding herself slighted, she resolved to do one or other, or both, a mischief the first opportunity. In the business of the child, she also acknowledged, she was actuated by revenge, for that Hewit could not possibly be the father.

As John was, in every respect, inno-

cent, he now became an object of universal compassion, and every possible step was taken to induce him to return, but in vain. His master advertised him as a runaway apprentice, which advertisement appeared in the Daily Advertiser of the 18th of September, 1760, hand bills were distributed; no John returned. At last at Christmas time, in the year 1763, I am sure I have reason enough to remember the circumstance, he was passed to his parish from the coast of Suffex, in a most miserable and emaciated state as a vagrant.

Thus the wicked wretch, who had been the cause of all this mischief, stayed upon the spot, brazening out every thing, and glorying in her infamy; while he, whose crime amounted, at most, to imprudence, bore all the punishment.

But the decree was just. Bold guilt will ever, in the end, find its reward. The

law will overtake it, and so it did here, for Jenny Rhodes was hanged at Warwick two years afterwards, for the murder of this very child she falsely swore to Hewit; but imprudence carries with it its own punishment: It is a coward in vice, and trembles at scare-crow consequences, invented by fear. Had John Hewit felt himself fully conscious that his conduct had been completely irreproachable, he would have braved an investigation; but as he knew he had associated with wretches who were capable of swearing his life away, innocence itself was no shield for him; and, out of despair, he left his home to become a wanderer and to suffer, as the reader shall see, punishment enough. Let not young men, therefore, be imprudent. The torture cannot punish innocence; the mind can smile at it: Whereas self reproaching imprudence will goad the mind until it find a torture for itself; which, indeed, is its only escape from infamy, for

I'll venture to say, that any young man, who has been repeatedly imprudent, and has not reproached himself, has gone a great way, indeed, towards villany.

But if it be difficult for a young man to retreat from imprudence—what must it be for a young woman? The world are very little inclined to soften imprudence with the mild name of misfortune; and it is generally impossible, and always very difficult for the poor wretch herself, howsoever well she may be inclined, to overcome the contumely and scorn that is constantly thrown upon her. Thus one crime follows another, and unhappy wretches of this description, are lost, first to themselves, and afterwards to society, except when some extraordinary circumstance points out to the world a mode of reconciliation, they, themselves, have not the courage to adopt. Both these consequences happened in the present case.

Jenny Rhodes was hanged, and Susan Wingrove, having leisure to repent of her past life upon a sick bed, became, afterwards, by the good offices of Parson Williams, a sincere penitent, and was treated as an unfortunate woman, entitled to the countenance of her sex, and the consideration of society.

CHAP. IV.

TOUCHES UPON SAGACITY AND PRUDENCE, AND
INFORMS THE READER OF SOME PARTICULARS
RELATIVE TO HANNAH'S ELDEST BROTHER.

JOHN HEWIT had scarcely left the country when I got a complete insight into the business that had terminated so unfortunately for him. I found that he and the two women had been dupes to Sourby, who contrived the whole with the diabolical intention of getting rid of them all; and these were his reasons: He was tired of a connection with Jenny Rhodes, by whom he had that child, which she falsely swore to Hewit; he loved Susan Wingrove, of whom he was determined to be revenged, because she preferred Hewit to him; and he de-

tested Hewit for perpetually stepping before him in the favour of women, notwithstanding all his own arts; and, besides all this, he had a more powerful motive: a secret design against me: in which, he thought, he stood no chance of success unless he could put Hewit out of the way.

I have already said, that I thoroughly knew the heart and principles of this man; this knowledge with which one would think I was inspired, seemed to guard me against all his practices, and it was tentatively keeping to myself how completely I had in my mind developed his character, that gave me opportunity, not only of frustrating all his designs, but of coming at their motives.

Hewit had hardly turned his back when Sourby unmasked, and gave me clearly to understand that he wished me to consider him as a lover. Timed as this declaration

was, I could not but see, in a moment, into the whole mystery. I concealed, however, my suspicions; and turning his own arts against himself, I contrived, by leading questions, in different conversations, to come, in parcels, at the whole of what I have just related; nor even young and inexperienced as I was, is there any thing extraordinary in this? He was too vain of his influence over others to believe he could possibly be vulnerable himself; besides he had conquered and deceived experienced and artful women; what need then of much caution with one so artless as I was? This foible I played upon. I pretended to listen to him with pleasure, till I had wormed out of him enough for my purpose; I then unmasked in my turn, and shewed him he was in my power; but, like Tamerline, bid him keep his own wicked secret and be safe, upon condition, he never troubled me again with his nauseous love.

It is so easy for women, completely virtuous, to penetrate the arts of designing lovers, that I am astonished they ever fall into a snare. The confident and brutal manner in which Clarissa confesses Lovelace eyed her in the coach from Hampstead, would have been enough for me; and, however, through the medium of exaggeration, such circumstances upon paper, may serve as a warning, I'll venture to say, the woman, in real life, who notices and feels the force of such a look from a profligate lover, and is afterwards betrayed, lends a helping hand to her own destruction.

As to myself I had long made my determination to have John Hewit, or remain single; otherwise, as I have before noticed, I could have had my choice of husbands; and among the rest, who, like Edwin, sighed, but never spoke of love, was that honest creature Binns.

That part of my life which past during the absence of Hewit, was certainly little more than a chasm in an active history like mine; I, therefore, as if I felt a presentiment of all that was to befall me, was constantly employed in qualifying myself in every thing that could counteract the evils of life, and, above all, in storing my mind with every gift and ingredient necessary to become the best wife in the world.

So much was my mind occupied in this manner, that nothing was more common than to hear people say, that if Hannah Hewit were to be thrown destitute upon an uninhabited island, she would find so many resources in her own ingenuity as to give her little reason to regret her separation from society, which remarks I never heard but I shuddered; though at that time, nothing could be farther from my thoughts, than that I should have such

deplorable cause to call that ingenuity into action.

It may not be amiss, in the interval, before Hewit's return, at which time this history will become more active, to give some account of what became of my own family. The reader will remember the untimely fate of my father and mother, and my little brother and sister; and that after that unfortunate circumstance, there remained only my uncle and aunt, and my two brothers. My uncle and aunt died in the workhouse. My eldest brother, who was nine years older than I, and of a wild disposition, ran away and entered on board of ship; and my other brother, who was not so old by four years, having learnt to write a fine hand, was taken into the house of an attorney; and, at last, became so useful to him, that he articulated him as a clerk.

Wild as my eldest brother was, his

mind was noble, and he had an enterprising spirit. I knew him to be incapable of any thing vile, or unworthy; and, therefore, had not the least doubt but that he would honourably make his way through the world. It was not long before I was convinced of this, for as he had a great affection for me, and had faithfully kept up a correspondence with me, as often as his precarious way of life gave him opportunity, I not only became acquainted with all that he did, but had it in my power, by means of answers to his letters, to give him a little sisterly advice; which, though in his light way, he commented on with great humour, he certainly took in good part, and never failed kindly to thank me for.

My brother, when a private man, was chosen by the admiral as his cockswain. He was afterwards placed upon the quarter deck; and, in process of time, passed as a lieutenant; but as promotion in the

navy was slow, and many young men of gallantry had, at that time, a thirst for privateering, though he had not interest to procure a command for himself, he got to be first lieutenant of a very fine privateer out of Bristol, of twenty-eight guns, called the *Britannia*.

This was about six months after John Hewit left Wolverhampton; and my brother being at that time cruising in the channel, and, of course, frequently in and out of port, I heard from him often; which, indeed, was almost unnecessary, for the newspapers were perpetually speaking of his valour and conduct; and though only second in command in a privateer, his character, as a naval officer, stood very high.

About this time he was concerned in an adventure that made a great noise, the particulars of which he imparted to

me in a letter, and I cannot do better than lay it before my readers. I have certainly no copy of it, but am able to transcribe it from my memory with great fidelity. It will serve to give an excellent trait of his character.

CHAP. V.

THE LETTER OF CAPTAIN HIGGINS.

“DEAR HANNAH,

“I HAVE struck a stroke that has made my fortune. If I had failed, I should have been hanged. What I did was mutiny; I have succeeded, and the world, and especially the merchants of Bristol, will call it magnanimity. But this is the nature of mankind.

“Not to keep you in suspense, we fell in, four days ago, with a loggerheaded St. Domingo man, richly laden with cotton and indigo, but almost double our

force. We called a counsel of the officers, and the captain was against fighting her, and by all the laws of prudence he was right. Being, however, a kind of now or never business for me, I took advantage of the anxiety of the fine fellows who longed to have a brush at her, and used every argument in my power to obtain his consent, but in vain—curiously mortifying! to lose such a prize, such a regale to so many jolly dogs and their families. I took another touch at persuading him, it would not do, he represented the risk we ran, and the almost utter impossibility of avoiding being taken; he appealed particularly to me, whether I did not know him for a man of courage, and said this was not courage, it was madness. Lord I knew every word he uttered to be truth; but what then, had we not a fine stupid looking hull in sight, lined with bales of cotton. Ah Hannah! if you had but seen how we were standing up to her when we received positive orders to put

about ship and run away, damme you would have done as I did. Come my lads, said I, we'll fight her. The wicked rogues, what dye think they did? They gave me three cheers. 'Very well,' said the captain, 'remember I have no hand in this, this is mutiny.' Dye hear that, my boys, said I, the captain orders all hands to quarters. So on I went, you see, as my brother the lawyer says, *secundem artem*; sanctioning all my orders with the captain's name, while he was cursing away in the cabin, and swearing he would bring me to a court martial. Well, what would you have? We knocked her about gloriously! It would have done your heart good to have been with us. At last, running long side of her, captain, said I, I am going by your orders to board the St. Domingo man: No sooner said than done; whip I was aboard her in the poising of a capstern bar. Struck her colours with my own hand, you jade, got her papers, battened every thing right and tight. Well, what dye ye think

was the next thing? Found two women in the cabin; there was a prize! I don't know how it is, but you never knew a fellow in your life that was in half so good a cue for making love as when he had just been a fighting; and then I had been out of sight of shore so long. I brushed up to them both—what do you think happened? Turning my eyes towards the state room, a poor unfortunate woman lay at her length; the poor soul had received her commission for the next world; but looking further, a helpless little infant—The little toad has, at this moment, got hold of my finger, Hannah—Let me write you little slut do! Well she was to all appearance dead. She had fallen, it seems, with her mother, and lain for more than a quarter of an hour weltering in blood, 'till she had screamed herself hoarse, and lost her strength. This, you see, I learnt from my two enamoratas, who had seen all this, and had given the poor little soul no assistance. I was devilishly in love

with them now to be sure. You never heard such fine love language in your life. I cursed them for two infernal hell-cats, and bid them bestir themselves and assist the poor little creature, or I'd put them in irons. Well, away I went to work, brought her to, got a fire; but the best of it was, our people not hearing any thing of me, thought I was murdered, so aboard they came in a shoal. What dye think I was about? Making pap for little Britannia. I mean to call her Britannia Hannah. I have taken good care of her ever since. Whenever I can spare time, she is upon my knee, and then, by way of mortifying the jezabels, who would have let her die without help, I make them turn out watch, and watch to nurse her. But, Hannah, you are to understand these are not English women, they are a sort of Spanish mulattos. No, no, I have seen a pretty many countries, but either for beauty, or goodness, there are no women in the world like the English. The mother of my little

charge was an American. Her features are very beautiful; and so after a bit of a snivel, for you know I am a woman in these matters, I had her treated with all decency, and then committed her to Davy Jones's locker; and for want of a chaplain, I said the burial service myself, and, perhaps, with as much sincerity, as his reverence. And so you see the love I was in such a cursed hurry to entertain for the dingy ladies, I transferred to the mother of my little smiling companion. You don't know what good company she is, though she can't speak; but that you know she'll pay off with interest when she grows up. I'll make her fortune if I live. But don't you think I have made a good distinction? No, no; that is my pride; a true sailor never thinks of skin deep pleasures whenever any thing comes across him that interests the heart.

“ But I must be brief, as the Ghost says in Hamlet, ‘ The prize is going to leave

us.' I have put on board the second lieutenant, as prize-master, Jack Ringbolt, Dick Dawson, Joe Musgrove, and the cleverest fellow, of an ordinary seaman, I ever met with, one Charles Walmsley, I entered him myself at Bristol, he is a devilish fighty fellow, and sings a good song, but what's better, as we boarded the St. Domingo man, he sent a Spanish rascal to Abraham's bosom just as he was aiming a pole ax at my head.

"Now after all, I'll tell you what, I am almost sorry for what has been done; the captain is sulky, and won't avail himself of our good fortune. He has taken the command of the ship again, and ordered us to go for Bristol, where, he says, he'll bring us to account. Lord love him, I know him to be as good a man as ever lived, and as clever a seaman as ever stept between stem and stern; a valuable friend, an affectionate husband, and a tender father; but I have ruined him for all that,

by disobeying his orders, and yet his orders were reasonable. 'Tis true he'll convince his owners that we were guilty of mutiny, but will he convince them, that this St. Domingo man, is not worth five and fifty thousand pounds? But I hope to reconcile him before we arrive; in which case he shall freely have all the glory of the battle, and I'll content myself with having saved little Britannia from a watery grave. In either case, I know, you love me well enough to give me your approbation. Adieu, the first box of indigo we unpack I'll send you as a present to blue your cloaths, being,

“ Dear Hannah,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ THOMAS HIGGINS.”

CHAP. VI.

THE SEQUEL OF CAPTAIN HIGGINS'S INFORMATION—
A LETTER FROM CHARLES WAMLESLEY—AND SOME
ACCOUNT OF HANNAH'S SECOND BROTHER.

THE event turned out as my brother had predicted. He was carried round Bristol on the sailor's shoulders, the owners immediately subscribed to build a privateer of thirty-six guns, the largest that ever sailed out of that port; and the poor captain was advised to stay at home with his family, and looked upon as a very peaceable, worthy member of society, but as one not fit to command a fighting ship; nay, he could never after get an employ in the merchant's service; for, of course, he

who would not not attack an enemy, could not defend himself.

I must do my brother the justice to say, that he was indefatigable in defending the reputation of his captain; but all his efforts were considered as handsome instances of his own forbearance and disinterestedness, and only served, while they the better confirmed him in the good opinion of his employers to load the poor unfortunate captain with additional obliquy.

At length the vessel was ready, and never was there greater parade upon any similar occasion. She was launched with as much form and ceremony as a first rate. A ball was given to the ladies, favours were worn, glasses were blown with the names of the ship and commander, cut on their rims, Fan mounts carried her portrait; in short, expectation was never more a tip toe, nor was it ever better gratified. His success was astonishing, and

he found himself presently worth seventeen thousand pounds, his share of the prize money arising from his different captures.

For my own part I grew as rich as a Jew, and as happy as a queen; for he was continually sending me presents, and would have had me come and live with him at Bristol, where, sailor like, he had a house open to all comers; but I was bound both by inclination and duty to stay where I was; for, I own, I could not give over the hope I had of, once more, seeing John Hewit; and then again, exchanging a life of industry for a life of idleness, was little suited to my taste; besides I was an apprentice in a worthy family, and had my points of honour to consider as well as my brother had his.

This trade continued for a year and a half. At length, nothing was heard of my brother, nor his ship, and the con-

jectures of all his friends were that he was either lost, or taken. After I had been about three months in this state of uncertainty, I received, by the post, the following letter,

TO MRS. HANNAH HIGGINS,
LIVING AT MR. SMALLBROOK'S,
MANUFACTURER,
WOLVERHAMPTON.

"MRS. HANNAH,

"MADAM,

"BEING, for the present, disabled of the use of my right arm by reason of a wound from a splinter in running under the fort of Vigo, I write by the hand of the gentleman, next in command, I being, by your brother's goodness, first lieutenant, to let you know that I am very much afraid your brother's hanged; but don't be alarmed, let them hang him at their peril; if they do, I'll run up the two Spaniards at the yard arm, and so I have sent them word.

“ The thing is, your brother has been conquered by treachery, fair fighting would never have done it. Last Saturday was a fortnight, at two o'clock, P. M. we put into Vigo for water. Captain Higgins was invited ashore by the governor, in a very handsome manner, that I must needs say, but let a Spaniard alone. They had, it seems, declared war against England, and we being at sea, never heard of it.

“ So after giving my captain a good dinner, he got a very pretty piece of news for his desert. They told him he was a prisoner, and desired he would send instructions to me, his first lieutenant, to deliver up the ship and cargo to two swarthy rascals of Spaniards that they sent aboard of us. Captain Higgins, who always valued his owners' interest above his own, wrote on the margin, in a figure hand, that nobody understood but he and I, these words, ‘ Walmesley don't regard what I

have written above, but slip your cable and out to sea. Whatever becomes of me shew your usual readiness to oblige me by obeying my orders.'

"I scratched my head and looked like a fool. There was not a moment to lose. At last it came into my mind, that by keeping the two Spaniards we might save our captain. So I got them below, gave them some liqueurs, notified my orders, and we were under a flowing topsail in the striking of a jack. As soon as the Spaniards discovered what we were after, they said I had better go back for that we should see captain Higgins hanging on the town walls. Well, said I, my lads, give a good look out, and if it be so, run up these good gentlemen; that will be some revenge at any rate: two to one will be odds.

"But now we had something else to think of, we were running under the fort,

and gloriously pepper us they did! But never mind that, I have brought the vessel safely to Lisbon, Spaniards and all, and have applied to the English Consul, and he says he'll do what he can for us; and as I knew nothing would give your brother so much satisfaction as relieving you from any uneasiness you might be under, upon his account, I have troubled you with these few lines, being all at present from,

“Your humble servant,

“CHARLES WALMESLEY.”

This letter gave me considerable uneasiness. The uncertainty of my brother's fate was a dreadful reflection to me, and there was little probability that I should be very soon relieved from my suspense. But there were other circumstances which caused me many unpleasant thoughts. This Charles Walmesley my brother had in his letters represented to me as a handsome man, and a worthy character; and,

indeed, in his plain, but strongly affectionate manner, had requested I would think of him as a husband, declaring that, if on their return I should like him, he would share his last sixpence with us.

I certainly had a proper sense of his kindness, and turned the matter in my mind very frequently, but those, who know any thing of love, will confess with me, that opposition confirms his reign, and obstacles serve only to stimulate his exertions. My brother's idea of a handsome man might not be to my taste, and then all the world could not have bribed me to marry a sailor ; again, how to give up the flattering expectation of reforming poor Hewit, who was a handsome man to my taste. These and other reflections created a conflict in my mind between my wishes and those of my brother. My excuses to him, however, had been nothing more than that it was a strange thing, even upon his recommendation, to fall in love with a

man I had never seen, I might not think on the subject like him; that an agreeable companion to him on board ship, might be ill calculated to make himself agreeable to me ashore; and that it did not follow, because he was a good seaman, and an honourable character, he would make such a husband as I should approve of.

These excuses were always combated with such sort of answers, as seemed as if he had some person who was a spy upon my actions, 'He knew my reasons—I did not like worth and honour; I liked profligacy, and a vagrant.' In short, he, at length, positively gave me to understand that he was perfectly acquainted with my partiality for Hewit; but assured me, if ever I expected to receive any countenance from him, I must think of no other person than Walmesley.

It came into my mind immediately, that Sourby was the cause of all this;

for as every body had heard of my brother, and even the newspapers instructed any body how to address him, nothing could be easier than for Sourby to give this information relative to me, which I had no doubt his malignant mind would induce him to represent in every possible way to my disadvantage.

It was at the time I was preparing to combat this treachery, which I had so sagaciously discovered, that I received the letter from Walmesley, which, I own, had a most extraordinary effect on my mind. It was so full of gratitude to my brother, so personally brave, so sensible as to conduct, and then, the poor fellow, with his arm in a sling, to think of sending me word of my brother's misfortune, not, apparently, out of solicitude on my account, but because he thought it would give his benefactor pleasure, and all this without a word of love. If he had seen and known me ever so, he could not have taken so complete

a method of interesting me in his favour. I own I felt this most sensibly; and so little does human reason take reflection with it, that I wished for a moment there was no such person in the world as John Hewit.

As I was constrained to wait till my patience was fairly worne out before this matter was elucidated, I cannot do better than employ that tedious interval in speaking of my other brother, who was as great a disgrace and reproach to me, as my elder brother was an honour, and a credit.

He was, as I have said already, articulated to an attorney; but instead of bending his mind to make his profession an instrument of comfort and convenience to his fellow creatures, his uniform study was to harass and distress them. If he was sent to serve a writ, or levy an execution, it was not sufficient to insult the poor wretch its sacrifice; he enjoyed with a detestible pleasure, the misery of the wife,

and the terror of the children; and with the most ingenious cruelty, magnified their apprehensions.

His idea seemed to be, that hardness of heart and subtilty were the only characteristic requisites in the practice of an attorney. But how he could acquire all this is astonishing; for really Mr. Cleverly, with whom he lived, was a quiet worthy character, who had gone through life with great credit and respectability, and then living at so remote a part of the world! But I don't know how it is, there seems to be an inherent spark of mental virus in our natures, that like the leaven in our constitutions, which is said to generate the small pox, when it comes in contact with that contagious malady, stamps our minds beautiful, or deformed, according to its degree of strength and influence. If we are but slightly affected with it, our feelings reach no further than folly, but if severely, vice, and all its hideous train,

mark every feature of the mind ; and this was never more truly exemplified than in my brother, who, from an infant, be the game or play what it might, was sure to get his companions into some litigation ; till, at last, finding the country no place for such aspiring talents, he ran away from his master, who was glad enough to get rid of him, and arrived in London, the true scene of action for genius like his.

From circumstances that afterwards came to my knowledge, I am enabled to relate the following particulars of him. When he first arrived in town, his brother lawyers were shy of him, fearing he might have been tainted in the country with foolish prejudices, or scruples, but in a short time they became so well convinced to the contrary, that he got a great deal of practice as an agent ; and it was very soon remarked, as a great feather in his cap, that he could swear to a service, puzzle a de-

claration, instruct a willing evidence, or smooth an honest one, with any practitioner of his age belonging to the courts.

At length he began to figure away upon his own account; and, thanks to the vindictive spirit of mankind, became flush of money. He turned his hand to every thing. He would parade the recesses of a prison, and drain the purses of the poor wretches immersed there, by advising them to issue supersedeases, bring habeas corpuses, or sue for groats. He would court the alliance of Jews in Duke's Place, to be instrumental in obtaining post obits, and purchasing annuities. He would be house-adviser to a bailiff the better to squeeze, and perplex the affairs of the debtors whom that bailiff might chance to have in his custody. He would manufacture bankruptcies. He would connive at swindling, in short, there cannot be a nefarious villany which those pests of society, pettifogging attornies

perpetually practice, but he would, occasionally, engage in, so he could make it turn to account.

Having now prodigious practice, he married a woman he knew to have been kept by a man of fashion, who, he hoped, would pay her attention afterwards; that thus he might be able to hamper him in an action of *crim. con.* and either hush the matter up, by a handsome composition, or recover large damages, should it be brought to trial; in which latter case, he would be enabled to get rid of the woman, and marry another from the same views. He was, however, deceived in this, for she made an honest wife in spite of his teeth, which so irritated him, that he beat her for not prostituting herself; but upon her making a heavy complaint against him, he was obliged to consent to a separate maintenance.

This circumstance gave him not a little uneasiness, for she was unavoidably in possession of some of his secret practices. To get rid, therefore, of every ill consequence that might arise from her discovering him, he connived at a prosecution against himself for a perjury, before she could be ripe for any such attack, and thus, by properly preparing the evidence, he avoided all possible danger, because no man can be tried for the same offence a second time.

Of this crime every one believed him guilty; but since the law did not find him so, mere opinions were to him of very little consequence. In Newgate he was visited by people of fashion; when he was acquitted, a hired rabble gave a shout of applause, and he spent that evening at one of the first gaming houses in town, and though he was kicked out for want of money, he returned in a short

time with his pockets well lined, and, afterwards reigned master of a Pharoah Bank, from whence he used to say, he had seen men rise nabobs at night who had been beggars in the morning, and others beggars who in the morning had been nabobs.

CHAP. VII.

TWO ATTEMPTS AT A RAPE UPON POOR HANNAH,
ONE BY SOURBY, AND THE OTHER BY NOBODY
KNOWS WHO, TOGETHER WITH THE HEROISM OF
BINNS, AND THE ARRIVAL OF A STRANGER.

MATTERS were in this state, my elder brother I knew not where, and my other brother I cared not where, when a very extraordinary circumstance happened.—Sourby had, notwithstanding his frequent repulses, pestered me at times with his fulsome love; and, one day, made an attempt to violate my honour, when Binns rescued me from his power, and gave him a severe chastisement; after which, upon my threatening, at Mr. Smallbrook's desire, to prosecute him for attempting to

commit a rape, he left Wolverhampton, and we had not heard of him for a considerable time.

Binns, who was rejoiced at his rival's absence, paid me, after this, more particular attention, and ventured, now and then, to hint, that if Hewit did not return, his assiduity might, probably, in the end, conquer my indifference.

Something I saw plainly he was meditating; and one day, upon my treating him with more than ordinary civility, I thought I discerned in his eyes a peculiar kind of self satisfaction, like that which I have spoken of before to have been noticed by Clarissa in the eyes of Lovelace. He being, however, a lover of a very different stamp, I had no apprehensions upon this account; and having received, on his leaving me, a very disagreeable piece of news, my mind was so totally

absorbed in it, that Binns, and the whole conversation went out of my head.

The intelligence I received was, that one Mrs. Crow, a poor old soul, who had been Miss Williams's nurse, and whom, on that account, as well as her being a most pious and good woman, I treated, as far as my circumstances could permit me, with every attention and kindness in my power, was taken dangerously ill and requested to see me. This was in the afternoon, and as it was winter time, and Mrs. Crow lived two miles out of town, it was nearly dark before I reached her house.

To my very great astonishment I found her in perfect health; at which I was so delighted, that I had chatted away some time before I considered this false intelligence must have been sent me with some bad design. Mrs. Crow joined me in this opinion, and we determined that I

should stay there all night, for it was now quite dark, when who should come in but the very man who had brought me the message.

We both began questioning him, and were informed that Binns had sent him; and as I had paid him handsomely, for he was a kind of errand man, and, occasionally, a porter in the town, he said, he had come himself to see how poor Mrs. Crow did, and to know if he could render her any further service.

There was something so ingenuous in this confession, that, without hesitation, I agreed that he should be my guide home, for, after all, there was some work to be given out early in the morning, which nobody could fit but myself, and, however, satisfied I might be as to Mr. Smallbrook's considerateness, I made it a rule never to neglect his business, unless upon any pressing occasion; as this would have been,

had it not been cleared up, in which case he would have blamed me for standing upon so much ceremony.

As to Binns, I own, I never was so astonished in my life as at what I had heard, but I did not suppose, singular as his conduct was, I had any thing to apprehend from it, because he had always appeared to me to be a man of strict honour; besides I was well guarded, and I felt a peculiar impulse, which never in my life has deceived me, that I should come to no harm.

It was uncommonly dark, and if my guide had not been furnished with a lantern by Mrs. Crow, we should scarcely been able to find our way. For a good distance we went on pretty well, but there was something, at last, in the business I did not like. The fellow was every minute crying out hush, don't you hear a noise? And this when there was no cause

for apprehension ; and, therefore, it must have been to frighten me, By and bye, when we came exactly to that part of Love-lane, where Jenny Rhodes stabbed Susan Wingrove, he cried out—‘ Lord have mercy upon us,’ fell down, and extinguished the light.

Full of vexation, and, indeed, suspicion, I groped about, and called to the man, but received no answer. I had very little time to deliberate, when a man caught me in his arms and began to grow very rude. I screamed out—‘ Hush,’ cried he, in a whisper, ‘ don’t you know me? I am Binns—I can no longer resist my passion for you, and this moment shall witness my happiness.’

He spoke not another word, but began to treat me with such violent rudeness, that in spite of all my resistance, I began to entertain the most dreadful apprehensions.

I entreated, prayed, screamed, struggled; 'till at length my strength became totally exhausted, and I fainted away.

I had not been long in this situation when the voice of Binns, for he spoke loud enough now, reiterated in my ears. He seemed so rejoiced at my returning to life, that I thought the man would have gone mad with pleasure. As I was perfectly convinced my honour was safe, I took this for repentance, and severely lectured him for his strange and violent conduct. He called Heaven to witness he had used no such conduct towards me, but on the contrary, had been so fortunate as to rescue me, once more, from the hands of a ravisher.

I said, I was glad of any thing that had induced him to repent of his brutality, but that what he uttered was false, for it was plain he had not only sent the sham

message, but had tutored the man, who brought it, how to betray me into his power.

He declared, by all that was sacred, he did not comprehend me, and was going on when a man, with a lantern in his hand, came running up to us; and having held the light first to Binns's face, and then to mine, cried, 'I have not strength to support myself!' and fell down.

We now left off our altercation, and began to inquire into the situation of the poor fallen man, but we had not pursued our good offices a moment, when seeing a number of people come towards us with lights, Binns cried out, 'Tis he, Hannah, as sure as you are born, 'tis John Hewit!'

'You are right, messmate,' said the man on the ground, 'I am John Hewit sure enough, but I am very weak; and flurrying myself to come up with you, it

overcome the little strength I had left, but I shall be better presently. 'They tell me I shall have a good birth at the workhouse; and after I have taken a little stowage in my hold, there is no fear but I shall right.'

A posse now came up. They consisted of parish officers, constables, and a number of idle people, who were collected together out of curiosity. We learnt that they were conveying some paupers to the workhouse, which was situate about a quarter of a mile further, one of these was John Hewit, who had been shipwrecked on the coast of Suffex; and upon telling his name and parish, had been passed home as a vagrant. They added, that on hearing some person at a distance scream violently, they were coming up as expeditiously as they could, but not fast enough for Hewit's impatience; who, weak as he was, snatched a lantern out of the constable's hand, and ran to-

wards us with such speed, that the effort overcame him in the manner before described.

Binns said he had been told of this circumstance, and was going to the work-house to use his best interest for Hewit's accommodation, when he also heard a screaming; and, being considerably nearer, was fortunate enough to lend me the assistance I stood in need of.

I gave Binns's declaration what degree of credit I thought proper; but chusing, at present, to agree to this interpretation of his conduct, I answered the various enquiries that were made in such a way as induced the by standers to believe that I had been set upon by some robber, and rescued by the gallantry of Binns, who seemed, in their opinion, to be born for my champion, for there was no person present who had not heard of his preserv-

ing my honour from the rude attempts of Sourby.

A number of sagacious observations were now made, some of them not very good natured; one said that, "Love-lane was a very good place for people to meet in the dark." Another said, "Some people squeaked out when nobody was a hurting them." One talked something about mock modesty; another, "What a fine thing it was to be a favourite of the ladies." To all which Binns made very suitable answers. As to myself, I was involved in such a train of thinking that I had neither spirits, nor ability to make any reply, and if I had wished to do so, perhaps, my contempt would have withheld me; and as for poor Hewit, who seemed very ill, he appeared to listen to the whole in fullen silence.

As this strange scene wore more and

more a very serious complexion, I hastened to put a stop to it; and desiring Binns to accompany me home, I parted from this motley tribe, first assuring Hewit that I would mention his case that very evening to Mr. Smallbrook, who I had no doubt would do every thing in his power to serve him. He seemed scarcely to thank me, and we parted.

Going home I insisted upon an explanation from Binns, of all his strange conduct; telling him, as circumstances I supposed he must have known, of every thing I knew relative to the false message, and Benjamin Dark the messenger's coming to Mrs. Crow's, which had occasioned all that had happened in Love-lane.

He declared, most solemnly, that what he had before told me was the literal truth. He said he had heard in the morning, from the master of the workhouse, that Hewit and some other paupers, who

had been examined at the Quarter Sessions for the county, were that day expected; that it had immediately struck him he certainly, now, could have no chance of gaining my affection, and, therefore, the utmost he should expect would be my friendship, which, he said, he was determined to deserve by every means in his power; that to effect this, he was resolved to do every thing he could to serve and assist Hewit, that he was even delighted with his project, which, he declared, had given him more substantial pleasure than ever he had felt in his life, and it was this very pleasure that infused into his countenance the confident satisfaction, of which the reader may remember I had taken such particular notice in the morning; so that, for that time, my sagacity was fallible.

He said he would have returned to the workhouse after seeing me home; but from the temper Hewit seemed then to be

in, it was better let alone; besides, the master was his particular friend, and would be sure to pay Hewit every possible attention; and, after all, one night was soon passed, and in the morning there could be no doubt but matters would be cleared to the satisfaction of every body.

Admitting all this to be truth, it should appear that this Benjamin Dark was the ruffian who had set upon me. In which case he must have made use of Binns's name, as the most likely person I would, in such a case, have relied upon; and it now struck me, that as the fellow came at different times on business to our house, he used to venture at some awkward compliments, and pass some rough jokes that seemed, then, to have nothing particular in them, but which appeared, now, to mean, supposing Binns to have told the truth, a good deal.

The morning, however, was to eluci-

date every thing, to that the dispute was referred. Binns assured me he would find Dark and confront him face to face, and desired I would form no favourable opinion of his conduct but in proportion as it should appear unobjectionable from an impartial investigation of it.

This was so fair, that it was impossible to object to it. I wished him a good night, and retired to bed with a more perturbed mind than I had ever before experienced.

CHAP. VIII.

THE MYSTERY OF THE RAPE LEADS TO ANOTHER MYSTERY OF A MORE COMPLEX KIND; WHICH NOT ONLY POSES THE SAGACITY OF HANNAH, BUT OF ALL WOLVERHAMPTON.

It will very easily be credited that I scarcely closed my eyes the whole night. A variety of conflicting ideas agitated my mind, and I very plainly saw I was in such a situation that I had need of a protector. My talents were such an object of envy, and my conduct was so exemplary, that I had no doubt, if I continued long in a single state, but the vulgar malignity of the wretches, who had too little principle to imitate me, would, one day or other, induce them to fabricate

some lie, with such artful circumstances, as might gain general credit; and then all my towering prospects of superiority would vanish into air.

From all those combatting considerations, I thought it incumbent on me to form an immediate resolution. John Hewit was now come back; on him I had set my heart: What then? I could not make the first declaration; and though he would find plenty of informers, of whom he would learn that my name, on his account, had been finely bandied about in his absence; yet, it did not follow, that this would appear a matter of any moment to him; his strange conduct, the night before, had given me no expectation that it would; and after all he might be married himself.

I determined, therefore, whatever might have been my former thoughts, that if there was any unsurmountable bar to my

union with Hewit, it still should not hinder me, qualified as I was, from settling in life. The next object, therefore, that presented itself was Walmesley; whom, yet why, or wherefore, I did not know, I could not get out of my head. A match with him would gratify my brother; and then he appeared to be such a worthy, good creature! but then, where was he? and again, if he were to return, how could I bear to think of marrying a sailor; And it was very little likely that he would give up his profession on my account.

Dismissing Walmesley from my mind, I was naturally led to think of Binns, who I certainly had a most sincere friendship for; and who, if he made out the story of Love-lane in his favour, had really many and various calls upon my gratitude; but I don't know how it was, I never thought of him as a husband without shuddering. He was a very well looking young man; and people would say, by

way of low wit, that after all, Hewit stood no chance ; for any body might see Binns and Hannah Higgins would be man and wife, they were so alike each other.

Thus I went on tormenting myself, and putting this question into every possible point of view ; my poor heart, like the faithful needle, reverting perpetually to John Hewit, the only point that had any attraction for it.

I had scarcely breakfasted when Binns came to inform me, that Benjamin Dark had made his escape in the night, and had taken with him several letters and notes, with which he had been, as was very customary, entrusted to deliver to the post-office ; and, added, that as his honesty had never been before impeached, and it was impossible he could have address enough to pass these notes, the gentleman, who had sustained the loss, conjectured that he was only an instrument in

the hands of some more artful person, and they were, therefore, drawing up a proper hand bill to circulate all over the country, so that whoever should be concerned in the business might be detected.

Binns said, that he hoped the alacrity he should shew in forwarding this detection, would serve to acquit him, in my opinion, of any improper intention as to his conduct of the evening before; and, added, that as Hewit was come back, and there could be no chance of obtaining my heart, he would with the greatest pleasure exert his utmost endeavours to bring about our union; in effecting which, though he should, of course, lose all prospect of being my lover, he hoped he should merit, by his assiduity, so far my esteem that I might consider him as a brother.

There was something so truly noble in the whole of this declaration, that I thanked him in the handsomest terms for

his uncommon kindness, and sincere friendship; and assured him, that whoever possessed my love, I should ever consider him, in the highest degree, entitled to my gratitude.

He now undertook to visit Hewit, and completely to overcome, in his mind, whatever prejudices he might have imbibed from what he had seen and heard in Love-lane; which, no doubt, had been sufficiently exaggerated since. This conversation, he said, he would manage with the properest delicacy towards me, which would spare me a great deal of awkward embarrassment, and he would afterwards take care to inform me of the state of Hewit's mind, that I might make up my own so as to act according to circumstances,

The beneficence, mingled in this friendship, brought tears into my eyes. Whoever I marry, said I, God send,

for the sake of my susceptible heart, that he may have a mind like yours; and yet, said I, 'Mr. Binns, so capricious is human nature, though I highly value you for your noble sentiments, and count your friendship as the highest compliment that was ever paid from exalted worth, to unprotected honour, if there was not another man upon the face of the earth, I don't know how it is, but pray be not offended at my frankness, I could not think of you as a husband.'

He said he had long seen it, and so far from being offended at my frankness, he admired it. He then took leave of me to go to Hewit; and in the afternoon, when he called upon me again, informed me that he could not tell what to make of his embassy; Hewit had said, that it was his intention to return to his master, who, he had no doubt, when all the hardships he had undergone were considered, would not be averse to receiving him, as it was

now very much his wish to stick to his business, and make up for lost time; but that he did not chuse to owe this favour, or any other, to any person's sollicitation whatever.

Binns said he had but an awkward account to give of his love negotiation, which he had determined to enter upon collaterally, collecting what he had to gather from Hewit, by introducing a conversation on the adventures of the night before. Hewit did not seem to place an implicit faith in what Binns advanced; on the contrary, gave hints, according to his idea, not much to my advantage, saying, 'he had heard a little of the young lady's conduct, for he had sailed in her brother's ship, and had there learnt that she was promised to one Walmesley, her brother's first lieutenant.'

How Hewit came aboard the ship, I could not possibly conceive, but this ap-

peared to unravel the strange circumstance of that intelligence which my brother had got relative to my sentiments. I no longer blamed Sourby ; for the blame, if any, was clearly imputable to Hewit himself, who, very naturally, did what he could to combat Walmesley's pretensions, the better to establish his own ; and, I confess, I felt myself flattered at the circumstance, for it proved, whatever might be his fullness at present, that his thoughts had been occupied on me ; and, again, the adroit means he must have used to manage this, so as not to discover he was the very Hewit, had not only the fervour, but the ingenuity of love ; and, therefore, proved that his sentiments of me were as favourable as I could wish.

I told Binns that my brother had certainly made me a proposal to marry Walmesley, who had done his duty nobly and honourably, but as he was a person I had never seen, I had no doubt but,

upon a proper representation of the matter, he would be easily induced to forego his intension in favour of Hewit, who, in this instance, of happening to be on board his ship, might, perhaps, have done his duty too. More conversation, of this kind, passed, and Binns reiterated his promises of friendship and services with great warmth, and after making some arrangement, as to the mode of managing matters concerning Hewit, we parted.

The first thing I heard the next morning was, that Binns had gone unexpectedly to London the night before. I was so astonished at this extraordinary intelligence, that I begged Mr. Smallbrook would enquire of his uncle, with whom I before mentioned he was in partnership, what could possibly have caused so unexpected an event; the uncle said, for answer, that it had originated from a very singular mistake. He had received information that a considerable house, with

which he was connected in town, was on the eve of failing; and that by a speedy application for a settlement of accounts, perhaps, their concerns would escape the general wreck.

The uncle said, that, upon this news, his nephew had seemed very anxious to make the application in person, because, being a party, he could more immediately act as necessity should point out, than if the matter was conducted by an agent. He thought, he said, that there was a particular earnestness in this zeal, which he greatly commended him for, and he immediately consented to his setting out; but, he added, that the precaution was from first to last unnecessary; for he had that morning not only received remittances, which set him perfectly at ease, as to the solvency of the concern, but large orders on their own account, as well as from other respectable houses through their commendation.

He said, whence this curious business could originate, he was at a loss to guess, but his nephew would, in a minute discover the fraud, and of course take coach and come back again. This prediction, however, was not verified, for he did not return, nor have I set eyes on him but once, and that but for a moment, and by a mere accident, from that time to this.

The false intelligence, in the course of a few days, was attributed to Binns himself; so was the false message I had received through Benjamin Dark; and, indeed, now was the embezzlement of the notes; for, otherwise, how could it have been worth his while to have left a reputable business, in which he had a handsome concern, for he did not appear to have taken any considerable property, or sum of money of his own.

And, indeed, this involved the business in complete mystery. His character

had been the fairest that ever was known. His uncle had a great value for him, and intended, when he had once settled, to have retired and left him and his sister the whole concern, first drawing a handsome income out of it for his own support.

Having, perhaps, more charity than my neighbours, I was, on these accounts, the last that yielded to what every day's observation seemed to confirm, for which I was not a little reflected on. It was said I must be out of my senses. If he had not embezzled the notes, who had? If he had not made Benjamin Dark the instrument of his intention to ruin me, who had? In short, I could not help, at last, inclining towards the general opinion; and as the most natural excuse I could make for him, I attributed all his conduct to his love for me, which had induced him to contrive a plan for my ruin, he had not the heart to accomplish, to take, afterwards, the supererogate, and romantic re-

solution of bringing about my union with Hewit; and in short, of forming all those strange and nonsensical resolutions, which could enter the head of no man out of Bedlam, except a man in love.

Yet to take leave of his principles as well as his friends, was a thing beyond my comprehension; no young man upon earth ever went so far into life with a more unblemished character. He was quoted as an example for all the men, and admired and esteemed among the worthy part of the women; nay, he was the last in the world to profit by the folly he had committed, for he knew nothing of trick, or deceit, and all those who valued him, who were not a few, in Wolverhampton, naturally expected that he would manage the accomplishment of his fraud so awkwardly, that they should hear of his being detected and brought back.

Nothing of this, however, happened.

The intelligence we got of Binns was that he was set down safely in the Borough; and shortly afterwards left the inn to go, as he said, into the city, but that he never returned; and, in the mean time, as the money for several of the notes had been received before proper intelligence could be sent to stop their payment, the most probable conjecture was, that he had gone abroad. All this appeared so feasible to the uncle, that though he was under no obligation so to do, he declared, that if his nephew did not return in a twelve-month and a day, and if in the mean time the gentlemen who were losers upon this account, did not receive some satisfactory reason to render it unnecessary, he would, rather than throw a slur upon his family, reimburse their losses.

This handsome conduct so operated, that the hand bill was not published, lest Binns might be apprehended, and suffer an ignominious death. I own none of these

circumstances pleased me, I could not from my soul fully believe him guilty; and though it so happened that this fraud was committed exactly at the time when his inconsiderate love for me induced him to leave his friends, there was such inherent goodness in his composition, that I could not reconcile to myself how one and the same man could be a valuable member of society and a vile cheat.

I knew, however, that my feeble voice, had I exerted it, would have had but little weight against a whole town, who were every day hearing, or forging some fresh proof of his guilt, a circumstance to me, of all others, astonishing; but it never, in any instance, proved to be otherwise, for circulate a story to a man's advantage, see, if credited at all, with what reluctance it is credited; and then he has done no more than he ought; whereas, accuse the best man in the world of a nefarious act, and the very suspicion shall hunt him to his

grave. Some 'thought it would come to that,' others 'had suspected it a good while before;' in short, a thousand undand some and unfeeling hints and sneers are insinuated about; and though the unfortunate wretch may have done many positive acts to merit esteem and admiration, yet this one implied crime is a blot large enough to eclipse all his virtues, and, in the midst of friends, he may die for want of an advocate.

CHAP. IX.

HANNAH RECEIVES A VISIT FROM MISS BINNS, WHO
PERPLEXES MATTERS A LITTLE MORE. THIS NAIL
IS CLINCHED BY A LETTER FROM DARK.

I WAS tormented with these cogitations when my sweet friend, Miss Binns, called on me, and said, she had something very particular to communicate to me; before, however, I inform the reader what the nature of her business was, I shall go into some particulars relative to that young lady, with whom I had unceasingly continued on a footing of intimacy, though other matters of more immediate importance to this history, have hitherto prevented me from noticing it.

I have already mentioned that the widow Gregory took Binns and his sister under her protection, as well to keep their manners from being tainted by the influence of those bad examples before their eyes in the conduct of their profligate father, as to rescue her maiden name of Binns from oblivion; for the old lady being of Welch extraction, was not a little proud of her ancestors, though her genealogical tree had a very uncertain root, and was now so blighted that it boasted but one branch, and that a very rotten one. Seeing the young scion, Binns, however, shoot from it strong, handsome, and full of vigour, she was determined to transplant it into her own nursery, where, by her fostering care, it might improve and flourish, and, at length, restore the tree to its pristine luxuriance.

This was the widow's darling contemplation; and though she was a very good woman, 'tis more than probable, had there

been no son in the case, her brother's children would not have been removed from Coalbrook Dale to Wolverhampton.— Thus Binns's fortune was her peculiar care; but finding in his sister every thing she could wish for that was amiable, and dutiful, she, at her death, made no distinction between them.

The affection of Miss Binns for her brother, was of so tender a nature, that it bordered upon the romantic. She was jealous of every one, to whom he paid particular attention, and refused, for his sake, every offer made to her. She certainly had a warm and sincere friendship for me, but I am convinced it arose from my uniform and immoveable determination, not to consider Binns in the light of a lover; otherwise, I have no doubt, but I should have possessed very little of her esteem.

The unlimited confidence between us frequently gave me opportunity of ex-

postulating with her upon this strange conduct. I represented to her that it was very natural, and very laudable to love a brother; but it was the duty of a sister to wish that a brother should establish himself in the world, and that the good of society called upon her to do the same; besides, if her brother did not marry, what would become of the Welch pedigree.

Her answer was, she loved goodness and honour, and, therefore, she loved her brother; that she did not think any woman could deserve him; that, as to herself, it would be time enough to think of a husband when he had got a wife; and as to her aunt's projects, as she had not lived to see them fulfilled, it was no great matter, in her opinion, even if they never were to be fulfilled at all.

This was the character of Miss Binns, who now came to me to make an important discovery. She told me, that from some mysterious circumstances, she had lately be-

come acquainted with, there appeared very little doubt of her brother's guilt; but even were he guilty to the utmost extent of what had been suspected, there was still something amiable in the motive, though egregiously weak and unpardonable in the transaction.

She gave me to understand that her brother had become a sacrifice to filial duty. She had known, over and above the money her father received through Mr. Williams, which her aunt had enjoined them both never to augment, that Binns had privately supplied him with sums at different times and had also paid several debts. This she did not blame; for, in fact, she had winked at it; but she began at last to be seriously uneasy, for he had not only had many interviews with his father, at a distance from town, but had encouraged him to come clandestinely to his uncle's, where they were perpetually closeted, as if concerting some scheme. Nay, the very night before he went to London, she saw him let him out through

a back garden, and heard him say, "Be faithful to me, and this business will make your fortune."

Upon a further enquiry she had learnt that the father was gone off as well as the son. She had, therefore, very strong reason to suppose that he had been enthralled by the artful machinations of a parent to commit a crime which, though the transaction baffled common sense, and set probability at defiance, appeared, nevertheless, to be true; first, by his flight, then by his father's; and, again, because there was no trace of a discovery by which it could attach to any body else.

She said that she came to me as the truest friend she had, to confide in me her suspicions, and the cause of them, and to ask my advice, as to whether it was proper to acquaint her uncle Gregory with them; I said, that after his generous conduct, I should consider it a very blameable thing, indeed, if she concealed from him a single

syllable. She, at length, agreed with me, and after laying together every thing we could devise to excuse Binns, without the smallest shadow of success, we promised to continue kind friends to each other, and parted.

About a week afterwards I received the following letter, which I shall give to the reader exactly as it was written.

TO MRS. HANNY HIGGINS.

" MRS. HANNY,

" This is to let u no that Binns his a grate rog. Hee a got al thee munny for the nots, and lef me in lurch. Harde tims, Mrs. Hanny, when rogs cant hange together. I do suphose hit is dangurouse to cum bak, so I bee gwain to see to save me lif, but I thort it rit to quainte u, that incent peepel mainte sufer fur giltie villiuns, so no more hat presente.

" Yours tel deth,

" To comhand,

" BEN DARK.

P. S. "Binns fathur, Mrs. Hanny, is is grate rog two."

The letter from Dark, which I immediately communicated to Miss Binns, served, with a variety of corroborating circumstances, to render my efforts to establish the innocence of Binns altogether fruitless; I, therefore, though I was not yet satisfied in my mind, talked as little on the subject as possible, nor did I make answer to any of those who, now and then, would din in my ears what a guilty wretch he was; but, that guilty or innocent, I pitied him from my soul; for, if guilty, what between his own mind, and his accusers' rancour, he had already received punishment enough; and, if innocent, nothing could make him amends for what he suffered.

THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

OF THE

HANNAH HEWIT.

BOOK II.

CONTAINING THE ADVENTURES OF
HANNAH HEWIT FROM THE TIME OF
JOHN'S RETURN TO THE PERIOD OF
HER MARRIAGE.

CHAP. I.

A FURTHER ACCOUNT OF JOHN HEWIT—A HINT,
OR TWO, CONCERNING SUNDAY SCHOOLS—AND
SOME PARTICULARS RELATIVE TO CAPTAIN HIG-
GINS AND CHARLES WALMESLEY.

I SHALL now speak of Hewit, who two days after he came to Wolverhampton, was taken extremely ill at his master's house, where he had received a most cordial wel-

come. I could not, with any propriety, visit him myself, but I prevailed on Mrs. Crow, to see him, and do every thing in her power to give him assistance. This trust I knew she would discharge, in every respect, to my satisfaction, for she was acquainted with my intentions relative to Hewit, and approved of them; and having this opportunity of being near him, she did not fail to avail herself of it.

Her excuse for calling on him was, that as he had formerly been taken by the hand by Parson Williams, she was sure it would give the good Vicar pleasure to hear of his determination to leave off wandering, and become a sober man.— From this she would take occasion to advert to the good that gentleman had done in the neighbourhood, and how many thoughtless young people would have been thrown away if he had not interested himself in their favour. This gave her an opportunity of noticing what a credit I had

been to his recommendation, and how much I was the admiration of the whole place, with the exception, indeed, of a few worthless people, whose good, or ill word, it was not worth my while to concern myself about.

He replied very little to all this at first, but as he grew better, he became very curious about me. He had heard, as I said before, many stories he did not like, told with an invidious intention; and, in particular, he could not stomach the last business in Love-lane; but the good old lady set him right in every respect; and, at last, he professed a wish to see me, adding, he had something very particular, indeed, to say to me concerning my brother.

I had been told, as the reader knows, of Hewit's being on board my brother's ship, and had made my own remarks on his conduct in relation to Walmsley; but it

now struck me that he had told Binns my brother was determined I should marry Walmesley, and I imagined he wanted to see how my sentiments were on that subject. I, therefore, longed for an interview with him, besides, I thought it possible that he might give me some account of my brother, who I much wished to hear of.

As he was now able to walk out, I agreed to meet him at Mrs. Crow's house, where, every Sunday, it was my custom to instruct poor children in their spiritual and temporal duty. It had always been my idea, that if the labouring people had some rational mode of employing the Sunday, they would be less inclined to frequent alehouses, and get into debauchery, particularly in manufacturing towns. I used, therefore, by way of an example for others, better enabled, both as to abilities and means, than myself, to teach as many children as appeared desirous of improving themselves in reading, writing,

arithmetic, and in short, whatever might be necessary for the common purposes of life; and that it might not be all labour, I added, by way of amusement, a little music, such as hymns, anthems, and oratorios; I believe, through me, Wolverhampton was the first place where the works of the immortal Handel were introduced, which are now so well known, and understood in country towns.

It had often occurred to me, that all minds ought to be enlightened; that human creatures were all made of the same materials; and that nature, in her general endowments, paid no regard to rank and distinction, but that she often gifted with strong intellects the mean and lowly, and branded with gross ignorance the high and dignified; that great talents, and brilliant genius, were as unconfined as the heavenly essence that inspired them, and that the genial sun delights to shine as resplendently on a cottage as on a palace.

I had no doubt but this philanthropic scheme of mine would, one day or other, be universally adopted; and, indeed, before the fatal day I left my native country, I had the inexpressible pleasure of seeing it, in an infant state, carried into effect. If it should have generally obtained at the time I am now writing, I have no doubt but it has operated to the honour of morality, the promotion of industry, and the advantage of order and good government. There were certainly, however, some who did not spare to say, but envy will always be cavilling, that were this the case, it would become a serious and an alarming evil; for as there are never wanting malignant spirits, who hatch infernal designs to sap the foundation of domestic quiet, and make men swerve from their different duties of husband, father, friend, and subject; so, if ever any such wretch, to gratify his own hellish purposes, should wish to unhinge order, and introduce anarchy, he had nothing to

do but speciously to appeal without truth, without argument, without common sense, to the bewildered imaginations of the multitude, through the medium of that very superficial and ineffectual information with which I had astonished, but not convinced their minds.

But this futile observation refutes itself; and though it is impossible that I, in this desolate place, can speak to what passes in my own country, yet, I'll venture to say, it is in no similar danger, for the purity of true English blood will always prove an antidote to the poison of any such viper.

After my school hours were over, I had, as I before mentioned, appointed John Hewit to meet me at Mrs. Crow's; and, indeed, my design on him was to beg his assistance in my philanthropic plan, which I had no doubt would greatly con-

tribute to soften his manners, and fit him for the purposes of society.

As he had told Mrs. Crow, that what he had to say to me was very material; so, indeed, I found it; for, after a proper preparation, I learnt that my brother had been shipwrecked with him, and very probably drowned, for that none of the crew, as far as his knowledge went, escaped, except himself, and Walmesley.

I was extremely shocked at this intelligence, as the reader may well suppose; but as it was never my inclination to make my particular misfortunes an inconvenience to my friends, I made an effort to recover myself as soon as possible, and begged he would relate all that had happened to him since he had left Wolverhampton.

CHAP. II.

JOHN HEWITT'S STORY.

JOHN HEWITT now began to relate his adventures; and as one judges better of a man's feelings by his own language, than by any substitute for it, I shall here endeavour to set his story down in the very words he told it:

"I can only say," said John, in answer to my noticing that he had enough to tell me; "that you have hit it; there is enough, indeed, if it was but of the right sort. When I left Wolverhampton, with the five guineas Binns would force upon me, all's one for that, I may pay him one day

or other may hap, I steered for Worcester, being determined to push for Bristol, and to go to sea. Well, the first thing that happened was, they took me up for a deserter, stole my money, and marched me to their head quarters at Birmingham; and there, after keeping me in a dungeon for four days, and bringing me to a court martial, I was ordered, by the name of Robert Grigsby, to receive three hundred lashes, as it was my first offence; God knows it was an offence I had not committed, but I must needs say I could give but a poor account of myself, and so I was had out and tied up to the halbert.

“ I had received about sixty, or seventy lashes, when a party came and enquired what was doing? They were answered, ‘ No great matter, only flogging a deserter, one Robert Grigsby.’ ‘ Why, damme, that’s impossible,’ said the other, ‘ here’s Robert Grigsby handsomely handcuffed; we took him this morning.’ ‘ Oh!

that's another thing,' said the serjeant, 'leave off drummer, some little mistake here, I find.' "So I was untied, and escorted back to the inn.

"The hand bill that advertised a reward for the apprehension of Grigby, certainly described a person exactly my size and complexion; but when we came face to face, we were not like at all; but as they had no power to discharge me, without their officer, who was gone upon a party of pleasure, with some milliner's apprentices, to see the Leafowes and Hagley; and other places about the country, I was crammed into the dungeon for two days more, and then brought up for re-examination. The officer, who was the left-handed son of a demi-rep of distinction by a trooper in the guards, said it was all owing to my own sulkiness; for if I had given a proper account of myself, I might have come off well enough;" "but come," said he, "my lad, you have had a taste of

our life, and so what say you, suppose you enlist?’

“ I told him the taste I had had would serve me for a meal, and only begged that I might have what belonged to me, and be permitted to go. He asked me what I meant? I said they had taken five guineas from me, and some silver. They all swore most righteously that I lied, and said I must be a hardened villain, indeed, to accuse poor harmless fellows of such a crime, when they were only doing the King's duty; yes, said I, and you were doing the King's duty, I suppose, when you apprehended me for another. Here the officer interposed, who, certainly, had not done his duty in not suspending all proceedings against me 'till the party had returned, who alone knew Grigby. He said I might thank my stars I had come off so well; that it was necessary to persecute the military law with rigour, and that there was not so fine a code of ethics in the world as

the articles of war;" 'for,' said he, 'if any one strikes his commanding officer, he shall be inflicted upon with death, or worse punishment.'

"That, said I is what you want to inflict upon me, for it is worse than death for a poor innocent fellow to starve in a dungeon, and be flogged for a crime he is not guilty of, while his friends are wondering what is become of him." 'Ay!' said he, 'and where now, Mr. Conundrum, are your friends waiting for you?' "I had now got a story by heart, and said, at Bristol." 'Well, that we shall see,' said he, 'I shall give you over to the civil power; and if Mr. Justice is satisfied that you are *compos*, you may go to your friends whenever you will, so no animosity my friend, these little broolies will happen, and it is all fortune *de queer*.'

"Queer enough, thought I. So I was had before the Justice, as a suspicious

person, that could not give any account of himself. They first sent me to Bridewell 'till the examining day, where every body that had been robbed, was desired to attend.

“ When the day came, I was examined like an horse at a fair. One said, ‘ that if I had been a little shorter, he could have almost sworn I was the man that cheated him by dropping a ring one day at market.’ Another said, ‘ he had a good mind to swear I had stolen his horse; for though he was fifty miles off at the time, every body told him it was just such another ill looking fellow.’ One man said, ‘ he could not exactly say who I was, but he recollected, perfectly, that he had often seen me with a straw in my shoe, at the assize hall at Warwick;’ and another ‘ remembered, as if it had been but yesterday, that I had been arraigned at the Old Baily by the name of Sligo, alias hard favoured Jack.’

“ Why all these people should be so desirous of my being hanged, who had never done them an injury, I could not imagine; nor, indeed, did I much care. My only fear was that the real murder would come out, and that the wretch, who had committed it, would swear my life away. However, it did not, and I was discharged; after making out a pretty good story, by saying I was a sailor, and that I belonged to the *Brittannia* Privateer which the newspapers informed me was mustering her compliment of hands, and on board which ship I knew your brother was first lieutenant.

“ It was in vain to say any thing about my money, so I set off without it, and a thought came across me, that as it was Stourbitch fair, I might, by holding horses, or doing any job that was wanted, pick up a few shillings. My only fear was, that in such a public place, I should be known; so I put a black patch upon my eye,

stained my skin with walnut shells, and cut my hair close to my head.

“ When I got to the fair, I found them all alive; but the first thing I took notice of was a company of players, who were very busy preparing a booth. As I stood looking on, one of them asked me, by the name of Blinky, to lend them a hand; and finding I went readily to work, they gave me some bread and cheese, and some beer, to encourage me. At last they found me so useful, that I was chief cook and pilot with them, and at night, when we were at supper, all of us hey fellow well met, ladies and gentlemen, kings, coblers, and harlequins; they swore I was such a comical dog, that they would take me in upon a share. Indeed, without vanity, I was as good a one for their purpose as any in the company, for I could play upon the fiddle, sing a song, and dance a hornpipe, as you know Mrs. Hannah.

“ When they found this, I was no man to be trifled with. Business was chalked out for me, and the part of Jack in Distress was advertised, with a song and a hornpipe, in character, by a real sailor, who had the misfortune to lose one of his eyes in the field of battle.

“ To have seen the shifts we were all put to, and our comical distress, while we prepared for action, you would have laughed at, and pitied us; paper handkerchiefs were made for the ladies, the gentlemen's legs were chalked to make stockings, and gilt leather hilts were tacked to wooden swords. But the scarcest article was shirts. I shall never forget the distress of one of the actors, and how he enjoyed it. He had sent his best shirt, he had but another, to be washed, and the washerwoman had returned it by her little girl, who said, ‘her mammy could not wash that shirt, for if she did, it was so rotten, she should rub it all to pieces,’ with all the

good humour in the world. 'My sweet little cherub of the wash-house,' said he, 'tell that empress of soap suds, your mamma, if she is afraid of rubbing the shirt to pieces, to pin it up against the wall and throw a pail of water at it.'

"Indeed, for the little time I was with them, I never saw people so miserable, and so merry. At last the night came when I was to make my appearance. I had got through the song a second time, for it was encored, and was in the middle of the hornpipe, when who should I see, staring me full in the face, but Joe Taylor, our Bridewell keeper here at Wolverhampton.

"Convinced he was come with a warrant to seize me, especially as he must have known my voice again, I could not make another step; but shuffled, and shuffled about, in confusion, till, at last, I darted behind the scenes, ran out of the

booth, cleared the fair, and was two miles off before I ventured to look round ; nor was I then satisfied that I was out of danger, for nothing could get it out of my head but that I was still pursued.

“ I, nevertheless, went a little slower, and this convinced me my fears were not groundless, for I not only heard footsteps, but, presently, a voice. Listening, however, with more attention, somebody called out, in a tone that I knew perfectly well. ‘ Blinky,’ and then, ‘ what faster still ? Nay, and thou’lt run, I’ll trot as well as thee : ’ and other speeches from plays, in imitation of different actors, by which I, at last, found that it was one Charles Walmesley, a mimic, and fearing no danger from him, I halted till he came.

“ He informed me that Joe Taylor had not come for me, but for him ; that one of the actors had learnt this from the

man who sold beer at the next booth, and had advised him to escape. This happening just as I ran out of the booth, he followed me as fast as possible, under an idea that I might be making my escape from the same person; for, in my cups, one night, I was foolish enough to hint that I was afraid of the Philistines, as they called the officers of justice.

CHAP. III.

HANNAH INTERRUPTS JOHN, WHO AFTERWARDS GOES
ON WITH HIS STORY.

“WELL, Walmesley and I——‘Nay, but stop,’ said I, ‘Walmesley! Charles Walmesley! surely this is not the man my brother wants me to marry! and yet you went to sea together, were cast away together, and saved together; it can be no other person.’

“You shall know all in good time,” said Hewit, “for the matter of that, Walmesley and I have never been separated since that day, ‘till I left him upon the coast of Suffex. Well, on we came,

but I should tell you, that at the time he made his escape, he was going on in the character of a bear, to dance and play upon the fiddle; so that when he overtook me, he was completely dressed in a very handsome bear skin; and having no time to lose, he said he had brought the fiddle along with him to raise the wind, as he called it, if it should be necessary, that is to say, by pawning it.

“ A thought struck me, that we could make the fiddle turn to better account; and I proposed to Walmesley, that he should, 'till we got into cash, still personate the bear, and that I would fiddle to his dancing through the different villages, by which means we should, certainly, get undiscovered to Bristol, where, I told him, I would introduce him to a man, the most likely of all others to make his fortune; meaning your brother, for that mimicry and humour suited his taste exactly.

“ He snapt at the proposal, and on we went. My bear was admired by men, women, and children. He tumbled, danced, played at quarter-staff, drank the company's health, and did a thousand monkey tricks. One day, however, Walmesley had like to have payed for his frolic. A butcher wanted to have him baited. I said I did not dare bait him, for that at Coventry, where, by the bye, we had never been, he hugged so many dogs to death, that the mayor would not sign my travelling licence, which I pretended, though no such thing can be granted, to have in form, without I gave security never to bait him again; the mayor very justly observing, that bear dancing was a funny recreative amusement, but bear baiting was cruel and not tolerated by act of parliament. ‘ And he was right,’ said a lawyer, ‘ bear baiting, or baiting bears, is exploded, and nulled, and voided, by *anno secundus, liber secundo Gulielmus secundum.*’

"I said, besides, that the poor creature, ever since they made him drink punch with too much acid in it, at Stourhitch fair, had been a good deal disordered, and hoped, as he done more than it was in the power of any other bear to do, upon the truth of which I offered to bet a hundred guineas, they would, with their usual indulgence, excuse the baiting.

"This, however, did not satisfy the butcher, who, with a whistle, brought to him a most powerful bull dog, that at the hint of, 'to him, my boy,' flew like a tyger at poor Walmesley. The lawyer told the butcher at his peril to proceed; for that if dog killed bear, an action would lay to recover the value of said bear, and he would undertake to maintain it. My rhetoric proved, however, of more use than the lawyer's; for laying on the dog with the bear's pole, I sent him yelping away.

"The butcher asked if an action would not lay for that? The lawyer said, 'No; dog set upon bear, and the master, or owner of dog stood by aiding, abetting, and comforting; therefore, master, or owner of bear had only acted *se offendendo*, or in his own defence; for bear was the same as himself, seeing that a man may defend a domestic as if he were *naturalibus & bonus fidum*, defending himself. Now, though dog was a domestic too, he was not a domestic in the same degree of consanguinity, that is to say, use, or utility, as some call it, as bear; for by bear, bear-warder, by licence from his worship, the mayor of Coventry, who was a wise and an upright man, and knew how to make extinctions, got his livelihood; now it could not be said, that butcher got his livelihood by dog; he might be said to secure his livelihood by dog, but he did not get his livelihood by dog; and, again, as to the value of the bipeds, or animals, he little thought one of them was a biped, by the

bye, there was a great distinction, bears flesh was valuable, it made Westphalia hams, saviloyes, and polony sausages; indeed, it had been said, that the same thing had been done with dogs flesh; but how had it been done? Not *legalibus pactum*. It must have been an *overt* act, and, therefore hidden, now selling bear's flesh was a *covert* act, and therefore open, and after all, there could be no comparison in the flavor.

‘In short,’ said the lawyer, ‘as that glorious character lord Chatham said, as every man’s house is his castle, his dwarf, his giant, and his bugle horn; as every master has a right to protect his domestic, or his domestic animal, as a bear is a domestic animal superior to a dog, because a dog is a domestic animal inferior to a bear, action, certainly, would lay against master of dog, for an assault on bear, he standing by, as aforesaid, aiding, abetting, and comforting; but as he was not so great a

friend to setting people together by the ears, as butcher had seemed to be to set dogs and bears together by the ears, he should propose that a large quantity of punch, in bowl, or bowls, should be provided, to be paid for on delivery by Butcher, and that, in said punch, all animosity, or querelous contention, should be drowned, liquidated, and washed away.'

"Every body having an interest in this proposal, it was unanimously agreed to, the lawyer taking to himself great praise for his able and judicious decision; and the butcher not thinking it worth while to enter into any further contention, as he knew he had to make friends with him concerning a little poaching business, which was to come on at the next adjournment of the Quarter Sessions. Peace, therefore, being restored, I locked Bruin up in the stable of the inn, and went to join the company.

“ The first moment I could get away, under pretence of feeding the bear, I locked myself into the stable, and had a conversation with Walmesley. We agreed, as we had plenty of cash to carry us on to Bristol, to set out as soon as possible, and have nothing more to do with bear baiting; but determined, first of all, to have a little fun at the expence of the butcher, I carried some cloaths, that I had bought the day before, into the stable, Walmesley dressed himself in them, I let him out privately with the bear-skin, which he hid in a neighbouring field; and when this was done, I ran to the house in the greatest confusion, and said somebody had stolen the bear.

“ A hue and cry was now set up, but no bear was to be found. The butcher, as I expected, enjoyed this pretended distress, and the lawyer, as I also expected, saw, in a minute, that the butcher must have

been the cause of it, and the punch having been put pretty freely about, the altercation grew high. He said it was a shame to obstruct a man in the honest persecution of his avocations; 'honest,' said the butcher, 'why will you purtend that a strolling vagabond of a bear-keeper, is for to be compared to a man of property, and a tradesman, such as I be?'

'Sir, I'd have you to know,' said the lawyer, 'that bear dancing is a tolerable employment, and has been sanctioned and permitted for centries. Did you never hear of Valentine and Orson, Bear-gardens, Synods, and Hudibras? That great lawyer says, speaking of Synods and Bear-gardens—

"And thus a Synod and a Bear-ward,

"Do differ only in a mere word."

'That is to say, they are collaterally the same, and there is not a pin to chuse. Now if synods, which are a religious in-

vocation, sanctified, and hyperbolized, by mandates, manifestos, and mandamuses, issuing from *corpus ecclesiasticus*, or the spiritual court; will any body tell me that bair dancing is not a tolerable employment? Clear, clear, cried the company.'

'Tolerable, or not tolerable,' said the butcher, 'I know 'tis a shame that a vagabond of a fellow should come here and knock my dogs about; damme, I'll lame his bear yet, if I catch him. I wish there was a law to keep all bears out of the kingdom. They may well say the laws want mending! I know this, that since the ladies have used bear's grease, the mutton fat is all blowed upon, and since Wesphaly hams, and these things have been all the kick, we don't sell half so much pork as we used to do; a damned shame that honest tradesmen should be left to pay taxes, and starve, while such fellows as these comes about and runs away with all our money; and then, the cruel rascal, mak-

ing his bear hug all the dogs to death; if it was sticking a calf, or a lamb, it would be another guess thing; that's allowable and in the way of business.

“ This is all very well,” said I, ‘ gentlemen, but, in the mean time, what am I to do for my bear? I strongly suspect Mr. Butcher, you have had a hand in this business; and I won't leave the place 'till I am satisfied.’ ‘ I'll satisfy thee with a douse in the chops presently,’ said the butcher, ‘ damned if do'ant;’ ‘ touch him at your peril,’ said the lawyer, ‘ how dare you break the peace in my presence? I'll have action, *corum nobis, informationis* and *idicamentatis* against you.’ The butcher raved, I laughed, for I could not think of quarrelling with a man I had so provoked, when, all of a sudden, news came that the bear was found.

“ This news was brought by Walmesley himself, who now entered with the

scouting party, that had been sent after the bear; 'he said, 'he had seen him about two miles off in the hands of a butcher, who was also driving some sheep. Sir,' said he, addressing himself to me, 'I thought it was your bear, for I recollect seeing him dance at a village I was passing through; but, for God's sake,' added he, 'give me something to eat, 'tis impossible to talk about bears when one is so cursedly hungry.' Some cold beef was set before him, and he went on talking and eating.

'As I was saying, gentlemen, the bear used to drink the company's health. If you please I'll imitate him, for I am cursedly dry—devilish good; well enquiring of the butcher who he was, and what he was going to do with the bear, he said he belonged to master Grim.' 'That's enough,' said the lawyer, 'the act of the servant is the act of the master. Where were you driving this bear to, Mr. Grim?'

'Why, damme, if you en't all mad,' said

the butcher, 'I know nothing about your damned bear.'

'Oh!' said Walmesley, 'I'll tell you where they were driving him, they were driving him to the pound, where I saw poor Bruin safe, and even 'there broke off and came away.' 'The lawyer swore an action would lay for false imprisonment in *Banco Regis*,' "I swore I would instantly employ him to bring it; and the butcher swore that we and our actions might go to the devil. He owned that his man most certainly must have been that way driving sheep, because he had sent him, but that he knew of no business he had with the bear, and, therefore, would not stand to any thing he had thought proper to do. The lawyer said, 'We should see how matters stood; if it could be proved that the butcher had not done the thing with malice purpense; that if it was an act of the servant, *solus cum solo*, without the precipitation of his master. If bear-ward found

bear uninjured, unmutilated, unimpaired; he should advise a week's wages of the man to be stopt, put down, expended, and laid out in punch for the good of the company. The butcher himself thought this but fair, in which he was, of course, joined by all the rest, and we set out in a body to release Bruin, all but Walmesley, who said he had no leisure to look after bears, for that he must be a good many miles off before sun set.

“ When we had got about a quarter of a mile, I pretended to have forgot the proper halter for the bear, and said, I should be very sorry to drive him in any other, for fear he should be galled; for that the poor creature was sick enough before; and, I dared say, he had not been a bit the better for being driven about. They all thought this reasonable, and promised to walk slowly on; but how slow they went, or how far, I never heard, for I joined Walmesley, who was waiting for

me in a field out of their sight, and we scampered across the country as hard as we could drive; 'till, after halting, now and then, for refreshment, we were, before sunset, at least ten miles from the village.

CHAP. IV.

CONCLUSION OF JOHN HEWIT'S STORY.

“WE were now safe out of danger, and, yet, how it happened I don't know, for if the country people had not been a set of stupid louts, we should have been twenty times found out; though, I must needs say, what with the glass eyes, a false tongue upon wires, and a string that pulled the ears up and down, all which were managed very dexteriously, Walmesley made a devilish good bear; and then I took care to keep the people at a distance, under a notion that he would bite them, I can't help laughing to think how many fools we made.

“ Well, as I said, being out of danger, we sat ourselves down to supper, and Walmesley told me all his adventures, and from that moment—but, however, that’s no matter; I had better tell you my own story, and let him, if ever he should come to make love to you, tell his.

“ Well, being come to Bristol, I soon found out your brother’s rendezvous, and Walmesley and Hewet were entered aboard the Britannia, at the same time. We went to sea, and though your brother is a dear good soul for encouraging everybody, yet poor Hewet was entirely lost, and Walmesley was all and all. To be sure he did all he could to make himself beloved, and he succeeded; and I will say this, there is something in your brother so taking, and so noble, that it is impossible to know him and not fight through fire and water for him; and now I’ll let you into a secret, Mrs Hannah; I had all my life thought that people could not live

free without being profligates; but your brother convinced me to the contrary; for though he drinks and swears, and loves a pretty girl as well as any fine fellow that ever lived, I don't think there's a bishop in the kingdom has more goodness, no, damme, nor more religion neither."

I smiled at this and thought I began to see that one rake had made a convert of another. What he uttered of my brother I knew to be truth; and, indeed, so does the reader know it. His letter sufficiently proves he was all heart and could disguise nothing, but expressed those ideas that were consonant to goodness and susceptibility just as they were conceived; and through life this is the fairest criterion of sincerity. No man can study to be good, it must be in his nature; Why then study to explain goodness? Let the ebullition take its course; and as nothing is so chearful as innocence, let the eyes glisten

with pleasure till they are dimmed by sensibility. A tear, the result of a smile, is a tribute to humanity ; a smile, the result of a tear, is a sacrifice to hypocrisy.

“ Well,” continued Hewit, “ you know most of what past till after the Vigo business. Walmesley was soon made an officer, and when your brother commanded the Eagle, he was his first lieutenant. To be sure, in the Vigo affair, he did behave well. I stood by and saw that letter he bid the second lieutenant write to you, and, to say the truth, twas I that first thought of it.

“ Now you see I am going to tell you what passed after that time. When we had brought home the Eagle safe to Bristol, our next care was to see what could be done for Captain Higgins. The owners did not chuse to have any thing to do with it, for fear of endangering the safety of the ship, for she certainly was very

fairly captured at Vigo ; and though they were truly sensible of your brother's gallantry and good conduct, they would not let their money stand idle ; so, to make sure of the thing, they fitted her out, gave a lubberly fellow the command of her, and the next news was, that she was taken by a French frigate and carried into Bourdeaux.

“ They now did not chuse to know any thing more about your brother than if they had never seen him ; so that he might rot in a dungeon and welcome, for any thing they cared. A choice set of us went aboard a Portuguese and sailed for Lisbon ; where, to our great satisfaction, we found your brother safe and sound. Walmesley had left the two Spanish hostages under the care of the English Consul, who had given them their parole, first pledging his word of honour to Walmesley, that they should not have their entire liberty till the Governor of Vigo had released Captain

Higgins; which, upon his representation, they did, reserving a right to demand of the owners of the Eagle, the value of the ship. How they will get out of the scrape I can't say; for my part, I hope they will be fairly trounced, if it be only for serving your brother such a rascally trick.

“ Well, now Mrs. Hannah, there is but little more to tell you, but that little is bad enough. We had no business to be kicking our heels at Lisbon, and so we got aboard a Portuguese to come home; and so making the channel, we were prettily knocked about for four days, and, at last, stranded upon the coast of Suffex.

“ You see, she struck upon a sand bank, with the tide at ebb; so we did all we could to clear her by the flood; but it would not do, we found she would not float; so, at last, finding she filled fast, we took to the boats, with a stiff gale from

the land, and the devil of a surf. We tugged, and tugged; by and bye, we lost sight of the other boat, and, I suppose, she sunk. You see, your brother and I happened to be in different boats, I should have liked to have had a birth with the Captain, even if I had gone down with him, but these things can't always be as we wish; so after we had been at this pretty work, I suppose, two hours, a sudden squall capized the boat.

“ It happened that I had a clumsy oar in my haud, so I laid it acrofs my breast, and made it serve me for a pair of corks; and by that time I was handsomely tired, I began to find that I could touch ground. This gave me heart, and I trudged lustily on till I was safely landed. So telling them at the next town that my name was John Hewit, and this was my parish, they passed me here as a vagrant.

‘ You are not certain,’ said I, ‘ that the boat my brother was in sunk ? “ Not certain,” said Hewit, “ but I fear it sunk. To be sure, as the wind blew so strong off the land, they might have been driven to sea; but that would have been worse! for how could such a nutshell live in a rough sea in the channel, where the wind and tide were quarreling like the bubbling of a pot ? ”

‘ And what became of walmesley ? ’ said I, “ God knows,” said John, “ whether he is alive or dead. Walmesley and Hewit parted when the boat went down. I will, however, say this of him; that whether dead or alive, Walmesley was a worthy fellow; and, however, he may be my rival, I have a great value for him, and so I have often told your brother.

“ He has a droll way of doing things, to be sure, but his heart en’t the worse.

If he tells you he has been guttling and drinking away all his money, and that he had great enjoyment in it, he means that he has done so by the mouths of others; for the eating and drinking, to his mind, is the feeding those who want a dinner, and his greatest enjoyment is to relieve a fellow creature in distress. If ever you see him, you'll hear him talk of his *menu plaisirs*, and he'll give it a turn, as if it meant youthful irregularity; and faith, in one sense, so it is, for there are very few young men who regularly pity misfortune, or receive pleasure by giving comfort to the afflicted.

“But come Mrs. Hannah,” said he, “whether your brother be saved, or not; whatever may be gone with Walmesley; I should be glad if you would consider me as a friend. I am not the same John Hewit I was when I left this place; I have smarted for my folly; and I mean now to stick to my trade, that I may always have

something to fly to, in case of necessity; and if, after some time, you should find me sober and industrious, unless you meet with a better husband; in so many words, I should be glad to have you."

I was very much penetrated with this handsome character he had given of his rival, and could not help telling him so. He made a suitable reply, and we parted at Mr. Smallbrook's door, for he saw me home, in very good humour with each other. As, in our way, we were necessarily obliged to pass through Love-lane, I could not refrain from mentioning the circumstance of Jenny Rhodes, and Susan Wingrove, and all the consequences of that business; this brought up Sourby, and Binns; the first of whom, he said, "he was now too well convinced was an infamous wretch; and the latter he was as willing as I was to think well of;" indeed, he concluded with me, that villainy had

been played off against him, in which, he said, "he should not be surprized, if my brother, the lawyer, had some concern." In short, he said, "he had yet a very long history to tell me, of one sort, or other, but that he should defer it till we become certain whether my brother was alive, or dead, because," said he, "it would come more properly from his mouth than mine."

CHAP V.

A LETTER, A NEW ACQUAINTANCE, AND AN OLD
ONE.

HAVING retired I began to ruminate on what I had heard. Hewit had told a round and unvarnished tale, as Othello says, yet there appeared, to me, something mysterious in it. He, as well as Walmesley, had done his utmost to gain my brother's esteem, and yet Walmesley seemed to have possessed it all. I very much feared that there were something to come out, if ever I should see my brother, that would not tell much to Hewit's credit. One thing was certain, however, that he now

seemed heartily contrite, and I yet hoped, even though Walmesley were to return, that I might manage matters so as honourably to think of Hewit with my brother's consent.

As there was a good deal of prize money due to Hewit at Bristol, his master and Mr. Smallbrook advised him to go there and enquire after it, in which advice I heartily joined them, in hopes it might be the means of learning what was become of my brother.

He had not been gone but two days, when, as I was copying a portrait of him in enamel, which I had taken before he went, a person enquired for me, who said his name was Walmesley. I was all in a flutter at this news, when, to my astonishment and satisfaction, he entered and delivered me a letter from my brother.

Delighted as I was to hear that my bro-

ther lived, and anxious to read his letter, I could not help eying this Walmesley from head to foot; and, I think, I never conceived so hearty an aversion for any body at first sight in my life. He seemed, an insignificant, whiffling coxcomb; but as I am always just, and as I knew that my brother would not have had a predilection for any person, who was not, in some degree, worthy his partiality, I suspended my judgment; and desiring him to sit down, read the letter, which contained what follows:

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"This letter will be handed to you by Charles Walmesley, who will have enough to tell you till I see you myself, which, I hope, will be in a day or two, if my crazy timbers will let me proceed, for they have been cursedly shattered by this last squall. You must know we were all stranded on the coast of Suffex; and

taking to the boat, we were blown out to sea, where, by good luck, we were taken up by a mackeral hoy; I call 'em cats, they'll live any how.

“ Well, after kicking about pretty merrily for three days, we made the land; and, as I generally find somebody or other I know, I pick up an old shipmate, the commander of a trader, who I saved from going to prison, by retaking him from the French. He is now a pilot, and I have a notion, a bit of a smuggler, but that's no business of mine. He gave us all a hearty welcome, and furnished me with quintibles enough to make your port, where I shall expect you properly to rig me out, for my wardrobe's gone to Davy Jones's locker. After that, I shall go and call those rascals, at Bristol, to account; they have used me very ill Hannah; but I'll tell you more when I see you, in the mean time take good care of Walmesley,

I dare say you'll like him, he is a droll dog, does a dancing bear to a nicety, so, till I join company, adieu.

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ THOMAS HIGGINS.”

I understood, from Walmesley, that in his way to me, my brother had been taken ill on the road; but impatient to let me know he was living, he had dispatched his friend with this letter. I asked a thousand questions, to which I received very singular, but not very satisfactory answers. In short, I found Mr. Walmesley, though a harmless character, a very conceited, self-sufficient sort of a gentleman; and though he began to assume the lover, and availed himself of my brother's promises in his favour, I had very little doubt, when we should all come face to face, but John Hewit's pretensions would appear to have a more solid foundation than Walmesley's.

In the mean time I amused myself with his excentricities, and plainly saw he was the very man, in a convivial moment, to win my brother; and, as Mr. Smallbrook insisted on his being in the house, I must say we found him a very entertaining companion. He was full of anecdote and pleasantry, and answered fairly to the character that Hewit had given of him.

The next day after Walmesley arrived, I wrote to Hewit, to tell him that my brother was alive, and coming to Wolverhampton, and, therefore, he had better return and consult with him on the means of obtaining what was due to him at Bristol. I also told him, by way of accelerating his journey, that Mr. Walmesley had brought a letter from my brother, and was at that time soliciting my hand and heart. To this letter I received an answer, which convinced me he was a good deal picqued.

However, he said, he would set out the next day, and had no doubt but he should give a good account of the gentleman when he arrived; and that, after all, if my brother persisted on my marrying Walmesley, and I should consent, it would be his business to submit with patience.

My situation seemed now to be a very critical one. I had a lover who very warmly besieged me, a brother, who I expected every hour to second the pretensions of that lover, which brother I tenderly loved, and who was trebly welcome from having escaped a most dreadful fate, and in the mean time was nearly losing, from a point of false delicacy, the man who really possessed my affections, and who truly gave me his.

In two days my brother arrived, and the next day after, arrived Hewit. My pleasure at seeing my brother, will be

easier conceived than expressed. He informed me of all those particulars which the reader knows relative to the Vigo business, and some others, to which I was a stranger myself; and, among the rest, that my brother, the lawyer, and Sourby had been carrying on a nefarious trade, relative to taking up goods and discounting bills; that they lived away in a great style in London, kept their chariots, and mixed in the first company; and that their plan was, to prevent detection, by sacrificing some innocent person, on whom, by a train of circumstances, they contrived suspicion should fall to exonerate themselves. He added, that he had gathered all this information from a clerk of my brother's, who had run away and entered on board a ship, for fear of being indicted for perjury, for you know said he, the old saying, Hannah, "the sea and the gallows," hey!

At a proper opportunity I came to a

round explanation with my brother upon the subject of Walmesley and Hewit. He listened to me with more attention than I expected; and, at last, said, he only wished that Walmesley should have fair play, "Let him," said he, "honestly tell his story, and what his pretensions are to your partiality; and, when he has finished, if it should appear that Hewit has a superior title, in God's name marry Hewit. Hewit is a good fellow to my knowledge."

I said, I was very willing to put it upon that issue. Walmesley's pretensions were at best collateral. A man, who had, in so many ways, been essentially serviceable in my brother's preservation, certainly, had every claim upon my gratitude; but he had never seen me till within a few days, or I him; and, therefore, love was out of the question. He acknowledged the justice of my reasoning, but begged I would hear Walmesley out, after which

he would leave me at full liberty to decide as I should think proper. This, of course, I agreed to, and that very day, after dinner, Walmesley began, in form, to relate his life and adventures.

CHAP. VI.

WALMESLEY'S STORY.

“**Y**ou have heard,” said Walmesley, “of one Billy Shakespear, a nice fellow Billy was, and how he said, says he, ‘All the the world’s a stage, and all the men and women in it merely players;’—and never was there a truer thing said.

“Why, now I—I ought to know something, for I was born in the dressing-room, suckled in the flies, educated in the lobby, and brought up in the property-room; and yet, Sir, shall the veriest hind,

the stupidest lout, the dullest clod, overtop me in my profession; there is something more than natural in this, if philosophy could find it out.

“ So much for exordium. Now for my history. My father—methinks I see my father—you understand me, in my mind’s eye, for I never saw him any where else, to my knowledge; but to the purpose. My father, that is to say, my mother’s husband, who, for a debt of her contracting, had been confined at the time of my birth, a twelvemonth in the Fleet, where, I am well informed, she never paid him a single visit, was—I love a long parenthesis—never to the house. He was a man, for a few ounces of phlebotomy, the extirpation of a stump, the frothing of a lather, or the fancy of a caxen—I shall not look upon his like again.

“ So much for my reputed father; who my real father was, I could never

trace. As I was cradled in the thunder trunk, I have been sometimes tempted, in imitation of Alexander, to believe I sprung from Jupiter; but, being more behind the scenes than Alexander was, and knowing better than he did, that gods, goddesses, and heroes, are not only meer, but queer mortals when they are undressed, I corrected my towering hopes, and contented myself with reducing the matter to the most probable conjecture I could form; which was, that the contention lay between Mercury, Bajazet, Caliban, and a scene shifter.

“ But this secret, like many others, relative to the origin of great men, women, and children, must rest for ever in oblivion. Whether my mother ever intended to discover it, or whether she could have discovered it, if she had intended it, I cannot say; the mystery certainly never came out; for having taken a fancy to wire dancing, and embarked for Ireland,

in company with the notorious Maddox, and the no less notorious The Cibber; she was sent to tell the fishes that I was the queen's son Cloten.

“ Little Walmesley, however, finding me apt, brought me up, and treated me as much like a son as if I had been ever so honest madam's issue, nor did I ill repay his tender care; for I soon went on in processions, held up trains, personated devils and cupids; and, at length, arrived at the envied distinction of representing the little Duke of York, and being smothered in the Tower.

“ Were I all my tale to unfold, even from my boyish days to the very moment you bid me tell it, you would hear of nothing but battles, breaches, and hair breadth escapes; but the battles would be with foils, the breaches would be of articles, and the hair breadth escapes would be from the bailiffs. All this to hear,

would you, my dear Miss Hewit, most seriously incline, you would love me for the dangers I had past, and I should love you that you did pity them.

“ Therefore as brevity is the soul of wit, and tediousness its outward limbs, and flourishes, I will be brief. I was soon noticed in the theatre; nay, not to speak it profanely, I was a bit of a favourite in every part of the house. I would let puns in the green-room, drink crank in the music-room, or hold a candle in the dressing-room, with any body of my inches on the boards.

“ These shining qualities soon brought me into great repute with the twenty-shilling actors; who were obliged, like other subalterns, to live like gentlemen, after deducting three-fourths of their pay to find themselves in stage necessaries. There was, however, a collateral consideration in this business. Five shillings in full weeks,

and three and sixpence in Lent, not being an appointment sufficiently splendid to keep up heroic dignity; they were now and then under the necessity of applying to little Walmesley; who having an infinity of business in the cazen way, and besides, having also, just before my mother's departure, compounded a *crim. con.* affair with a celebrated actor, who was afraid of his wife, though she, by the way, had about nine gallants, the rogue had become a little Cræsus.

“ To him, therefore, they had recourse; and he, on the moderate terms of a crown in the pound, would advance, perhaps, a few pieces for a month; to which the rogues would seriously incline and think there was much kindness in the Jew.

—“ It sometimes, however, happened, for lack of means, owing to the importunity of some washerwoman, the rapacity of some hussy, or the brutality of some

landlord, they were not quite so punctual in their payments as they ought to have been. Upon these occasions they never failed to entreat my good offices, which were not always administered without effect; that is to say, upon the advance of the premium. Many a respite from captivity, have I obtained for caged Bajazets, and dungeoned Lufignans; Samsons have been saved from the Philistines by my eloquence; nay, like another Theseus, have I rescued virgins from the devouring jaws of that minotaur, a bailiff.

“ I became now of great use to little Walmesley. I had reading and writing, which, as Dogberry says, come by nature, at my fingers' ends; whereas, the Tonfor could only make his mark. This being so, as so it seems to be, he kept his accounts, rather lamely, indeed, in no other way than by marking with a piece of chalk on the inside of an old scrutoire, exactly

in the manner of a score at an ale-house, the different monies he had advanced to the actors. Thus frequent mistakes happened, to which I gave a helping hand by, now and then, when he was drunk, and had left his bureau open, rubbing out a round O with a cross, which signified half a crown, and putting the half crown in my pocket for my own proper spending.

“ If two men ride upon a horse, one must ride behind. The little latherer thinking no more than the man that was going to be hanged, did of his dying day, of the tricks I had played him ; which, by the bye, I considered as a fair reimbursement of that money I had earned in my profession, after repeated trials of my honesty, such as leaving six penny worth of halfpence upon the chimney piece, which I must have been a great fool to have touched, well knowing why it was placed there ; he began to let me into all

his usurious mysteries; and, but that I was forbid to tell the secrets of my prison-house, I could a tale unfold—

“ In short, you will be astonished to hear that this muck-worm, besides notes, bonds, undertakings, and cognovits, had amassed together, partly in money, and partly in valuables, eleven hundred pounds. Nay, if I tell you a lie, spit in my face, and call me a horse, I say eleven hundred pounds; and then there was scarcely a deposit that did not tell some curious history. Here lay a diamond hoop, that some old enamorado had stolen from the finger of his cara sposa, as she lay asleep, to purchase the virtue of a theatrical vestal, who had three husbands alive and merry. There a pair of paste buckles, which some old love stricken devotee had purchased with her husband's cash, in her way from the Tabernacle, to win an hour's dalliance with her angel of an actor, who had just been personating a devil; nay, there

were more of these things than I have thoughts to give them scope, or time to tell them in.

“ But the most curious history that came to our knowledge was this; One of the bona robas, whose husband winked at her intrigues, had a very elegant set of jewels given her by a nobleman. She had besides, an affair of galantry with a figure dancer, and it was known that she lavished large sums of money on him, which she had received from the same quarter. Not that she was ungrateful to her husband, for he, now and then, shared her generosity too.

“ After a time, the husband being in want of cash, for money's a good soldier and will on, he took an opportunity, when she was theatrically indisposed, and could not sport her jewels, of carrying them to a jeweller. His request was that the jewels might be imitated, for he that is robbed,

not knowing what is stolen, let him not know it, he is not robbed at all, told the jeweller, that over and above the expence, he would make him a liberal amends.

“ The jeweller being an honest man, ay honest ! for, to be honest as the world goes ! begged to be excused. In short, it came out that the jewels had been imitated at the desire of the wife, that the figure dancer had received the major part of the money, and that the real diamonds had been repurchased by a man of fashion, and given as a *tour de gallantrie*, to the lady of the nobleman who had originally given them to the actresses.

“ But were I as tedious as a prince, I could waste it all upon your worship. Well, my papa, the barber, and I shaved the people pretty close. There was one thing, to be sure, I could not bear. It was almost always our practice to send in a bill and a bailiff. Now, really, that hurt

me. To see a hero, or a devil, or a ghost, after he had strutted, and fretted his hour upon the stage, and had stuck his fork into a smoaking mutton chop, at the Blue-posts, torne away in sight of Heaven, Oh it was pityful! 'twas wonderous pityful!

“ In short, it was so pityful, that I expostulated with old Shylock;—and, when he answered me with some sanctified speech, told him that the devil could quote scripture for his purpose. What do you think happened? He gave me some little civil hint about kicking me out of the house, a sort of a spiritual shove; and because I had made free, now and then, with our common flock, for no other purpose in the world, than for the innocent amusement of keeping a girl and a gig, he talked of robbery and sending to Newgate.

“ I determined, from that moment, to be up with him; but, said I to myself, remember Hermolaus and be hushed. False

face must hide what the foul heart doth know. I promised to mend my manners, and try, if possible, to be as great a rascal as himself. In the mean time, I was like a mole working under ground; I tampered with my conspirators, met them over a jorum of the righteous, at the very witching time of night; and, when I found them ripe for revolt, I told them that I wore a dagger, and I could wish it—

“ They understood me in a moment, and swore to live and die with Bedamer. To descend from my stilts.—To three of these actors who had been very much fleeced; neat fellows, lads of spunk, though they had arrived no farther in their profession than, ‘ Sir, the coach waits;’ or, ‘ Ma’am your muff and tippet stops the way;’ Did I broch my intention. I advised them to bring actions against Wal-mesley for usury, in which case they would, each of them, recover three times the money that had been advanced. They

were tickled with the propofal, and promifed to fulfil the conditions, which were thefe :

“ As they could never recover, without my helping hand, and as I muft give up the little razor ftrapper, if I lent them a helping hand, I infifted upon a positive agreement, that my name fhould not be mentioned in the bufinefs, till I fhould give permiffion; and that whatever money might be recovered, fhould be vefted in my hands, for the purpofe of taking a town, and opening a country theatre, of which theatre I fhould be fole and exclusive manager. Oh glorious thought! By Heaven I will indulge it, though but in fancy!

“ Mortified as they were at their ill treatment in town, where, they faid, fuch fellows as Garrick and Barry, ran away with all the applaufe, they looked forward with delight to the time when we

should be the admiration of the gaping bumkins. One saw the 'squire's daughter ogle him from the boxes; another was actually conducting a young lady from a boarding school down a ladder of ropes, that like a tackle stair to the high top gallant of his joy—In short, they were so big with expectation, that we had, in idea, got a wardrobe, scenes, decorations, and rings, and things, and fine array; but hold, said I, we count the spoil before the field is won.

“Walmesley still lives, in fraud and usury reigns,

“When he comes down, then shall we count our gains.”

CHAP. VII.

CONTINUATION OF WALMESLEY'S STORY.

“THEY swore to obey me in every thing, and we set our engines to work. The actions were commenced, and as the nose tweaker had advanced, at different times, twenty-seven pounds to one, thirty-three to another, and fifty to the third, the gross sum of three hundred and thirty pounds, was expected to come into the common stock.

“He laughed at all this, and told me, not suspecting I was in the secret, that he would threaten to do 'em up with the ma-

nager ; and as to master Wiggins, the pettifogging attorney, who had brought the actions, he'd scare him with the ghost of his last perjury, 'besides,' said he, 'Charles, nothing can be done without thee in the business, and it would be hard, indeed, if father and son could not be true to each other.' So saying, he put five guineas into my hand, I answered, I should in all my best obey him, and he rejoined, that it was a loving and fair reply.

" In the mean time Term came on, and matters had gone as far as a notice of trial. The actors had counteracted every one of his precautions, which he looked upon as the cunning of old Wiggins, who knew all his practices, and how to guard against them ; whereas, had I not prompted my actors, old Wiggins would have thrown them upon their backs, for he had inwardly chuckled at being employed, expecting, in the end, to serve

his friend Walmesley, with whom he had had a quarrel.

“Wiggins neither expected the actors would have been equal to the instructions they had given him, nor did Walmesley think Wiggins would have acted so vindictively, if there had not been some collateral reason. In short, these two worthy gentlemen, knew so much of each others’ tricks, that they were mutually afraid of coming into court; and, therefore, were both determined to have a private interview, which was very easily effected, for though they had not spoke together for several months, they often met at some alehouse, or other, near Clifford’s, or Serjeant’s Inn, where the Jew, my father, often went, either to swear to a debt, or to attend as a hired bail.

“Upon comparing notes they began to suspect me, but this consequence I fore-

saw, and was prepared for it, or any other that might follow. They might fret me, but they could not play upon me. The old hair-roaster gave me to understand, by a strange alteration in his manner, what was going forward in his mind. After a great deal of humming, and haing, he asked, 'if matters should come to a trial, what sort of evidence I should give?'

"I answered the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Why, what the devil, said I, would you have me lay perjury to my soul! No; not for Venice. In short, said I, if you ask me what I think of the matter, you are damned all of one side like an ill roasted egg.

'Well, well; but,' said he, 'you know these young fellows; don't you think that matters can be accommodated?' Accommodated, said I, why ay, that's a good word. It comes from *accomodo*; accom-

modated is a good word; it is as much as to say, that when a man is accommodated, he is—accommodated.

“Pooh, pooh, nonsense,” said old pinching irons, “will you serve me in it?” To serve myself, good cousin; for, look you, when you have settled it, I’ll claim of you that bracelet, the rings and other of those moveables of which our good cousins, the cozened actresses, once stood possessed.

“At last, we came to a right understanding, and I was to have fifty pounds, if I could settle the matter at any price, short of bringing it into court. My award, as arbitrator, was, that master barber should refund the original sums, allow three months interest upon them, and pay all costs; which terms, with great reluctance, were fulfilled; after this I told old pull-tail, that he was queered, bam-

boozled, and jockeyed, for that I was going with lads fit to seize the world, and rule it when 'twas wildest.

“ Being let into the secret, nothing could exceed his fury. He saw into the whole plan, and swore he would indite us for a conspiracy. I laughed at his folly, and whispered two or three things in his ear that brought him into better temper. He could not so far rule himself, however, but that he swore I should starve. Hang, said I, starve or drown, 'twill be in a better cause. At last, I told him to make himself easy as to me; and for him, when the trade of usury failed, if he behaved himself well, I would make him barber to the company.

“ Now were our brows bound with victorious wreaths. The newspapers teemed with advertisements for young actors, and actresses, the manager to be seen at the Black Lyon; valet de chambres, and

ladies' maids, were applied to for cloaths to furnish our wardrobe ; I coaxed away the colour-grinder to the house, who had taken umbrage, because the manager would not permit him to invent and execute a pantomime with his own hands ; got hold of a devilish good tumbler, a fine fellow, a little too bold, had like to have broken his neck once, by attempting to imitate the Fall of Niagara ; got the copies of all the new pieces, by bribing the under-prompter ; and now, being every way stocked with materials, money, and merit ; we dashed off and took the town of Stockbridge, in Hampshire ; where, by beat of drum, we proclaimed the play of *The Suspicious Husband*.

The part of Ranger by

MR. WALMESLEY.

With the Country Dance after the manner of

MR. GARRICK.

“ Stockbridge was a horrid place ; and if it had not been for the officers of two troops of dragoons, who treated the far-

mers' daughters, and invited us, to mum a little, at their public treats, we should have made a queer thing of it; but what was this to lads of fire like us? Did not the millener's 'prentice, the pretty landlady at the Rose, and the daughter of farmer Fuffocks, call me the gallant, gay Lothario? In short, though we left Stockbridge about fifty pounds poorer than we had come into it, 'twas so much pleasure for so much money, care killed a cat, up tail's all, and a fig for the hangman, and so we laughed it off.

“ After this; Oh! we had such marchings, and counter marchings, from Rumsey to Alton, from Alton to Reading, from Reading to Hungerford, from Hungerford to Landsdown fair; drums beating, trumpets braying, but the curse of it was, we got poorer and poorer; I did pity an unfortunate Frenchman, who we took as a dancer at Reading.

“The Frenchman was to have a share and a benefit. I explained to him that the share would be no great matter; it might be three and sixpence, or, perhaps, only fourpence, and three pieces of candle; but that the benefit—‘Ah dat is very well,’ said Monsieur, ‘mon benefice! dat is good to have benefice.’”

“When the benefit night came, the receipt of the house turned out to be six pounds, seventeen shillings. Next morning the Frenchman called upon me to receive the profits of his benefit; I’ll settle it with you directly, Sir, said I. The expence of the house is eight pounds, and the receipt of the house, last night, was six pounds, seventeen shillings; so that, if you will pay me one pound, three shillings, the business will be settled. ‘Settle! settle de devil; you must pay me my benefice!’ Benefit, why don’t I tell you that you must pay me one pound

three shillings! 'Pay you? Cot tam, vere it is then my benefice?' Good God, said I, you don't understand. 'I understand extremely vell—you make your charge a eight pone, you make come fix pone, seventeen shellang i de hofse, so I most pay vom pone e tre shellang. Fell den, code tione, vere is my benefice?'

"It was in vain that I attempted to convince him, by numberless examples, that nothing was so common as for performers to lose money at their benefits. He could not reconcile such a contradiction as that a benefit might be a loss, and all I could get from him was, 'Sare, you are not honest man, you promise benefice, I beg you tell me *ou est que mon benefice.*'"

"After a good deal of altercation, as I did not like to part with him, I told him he should make his own terms, when

he said, 'that since benefice, was *malafice*, he would have two chare, and no benefice.' I told him he might be caught at that, and so it turned out, for, at the next town, we shared nothing.

CHAP. VIII.

CONCLUSION OF WALMESLEY'S STORY.

“THUS we actors live,” continued Walmesley, “we live! Zounds, ’tis impossible to tell how we live. One cursed circumstance was, that we were always lighting the candle at both ends; always spending as much again as we got; so that, upon a fair calculation, the more we gained the worse we were off. Why, Sir, in less than a twelvemonth there was not a devil of us but was in debt in five different towns; but still we were as jovial as beggars upon straw; for, except a black eye or so, in consequence of a quarrel about some

dulcinea, who was constant to us all round, I must do the company the justice to say, there never was a set of more amiable officers.

“ But the fun we took most delight in was, what we call bamming ; and it must be acknowledged, this was my peculiar forte. Whenever we took a town, we were sure to find some green-horn, or other, whom we presently infected with the spouting mania. These soft sirs we used to teach a song, or a speech ; till they have so ranted, and so bellowed, that you would have thought nature’s journey-men had made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.

“ I made one excellent benefit at Nottingham, and another at Birmingham, by manœuvres of this kind. At Nottingham I got hold of the mayor’s son, a precious lank haired bit of a noodle ; I told

him he was the young youth in the world to represent great personages; for, said I, some are born great, some atchieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon 'em. Icod, Sir, he invited me to drink tea with his mamma. This did the business. I talked, Oh gods! how I did talk! The mayor was quelling a riot among the stocking weavers, so, you see, the mamma being, at home, not only the mare but the grey mare, it was agreed that Mrs. Mayorefs should bespeak King Richard the Third, and that little Zackery should perform the Prince of Wales.

“To clinch the business, the mayorefs invited all Nottingham, except the ladies in check aprons, to a hop, and circulated my tickets round the room. I had a glorious house, performed Richard myself, every thing went off nobly, the young Prince was applauded to the very echo that did applaud again; for, though he had a gait like a dab chick, a voice

like an ungreased wheel, and a dialect as querulous as three hammers upon an anvil, yet every one there, being subject to the same infirmities, like the hunched backed man, who thought the camel the most beautiful object in existence, found out a fresh perfection in every speech he uttered; and thus he never came out with 'Niow you my Loord,' or the like; but we were stunned with the applause.

"I must give you one instance. In the scene where the young Prince is shocked at the idea of being lodged at the Tower, Treffel says, 'I hope all will be well;' this was my hero's answer, 'I do whoope zo too, but coom to 'the Tiower, zin it mun be zo.'

"Shall I tell you the Birmingham business? Come I see you wish to know it. My flat there was a fine thick headed blacksmith, with lungs like a Stentor. I taught him the Early Horn, and made him

sing it so loud, that one day he broke a pane of glass in the tap-room we frequented, with his cadence. At last I coaxed him to sing it for my benefit; devilish warm fellow, put off, by agreement, three hundred tickets.

“ When he came on the stage, before the band struck up, he had a mind to pitch his voice, so he began, ‘Ti, too, tum, taw!’ ‘Damn your ti, too, tum, taw,’ cried a man in the gallery. ‘My friend eying the fellow with ineffable disdain, cried out, ‘Why then damn you! Damn me if I sing any more.’ So off he went, and this was all the audience heard of him or the Early Horn.

“ But I should have told ye, that long before this I had ceased to be a manager, occasioned, Sir, by jealousy, that green eyed monster. To be sure I did keep all the good parts to myself; but what is

there that a manager will not attempt? They told me, one day, that as our agreement was when we found it a losing game, to cut, and part the property; so it was now high time to take that step while there was any property to part.

“ I expostulated, threatened, and entreated, to no purpose, my authority was all gone, Othello's occupation was no more. They said it was every one now for himself, and God for us all. That they had worked long enough for me, I might now work for myself. In short, I saw it was all over with me. I knew well enough their power. I certainly had an idle, thoughtless way of involving the concern, by way of security, whenever they would supply me with a little loose cash for my *menu plaisirs*, and thus I had mortgaged over one day, perhaps, a thunder trunk, and a shower of rain; another, half a dozen ermine coronation robes,

made out of flannel, or else a collection of worsted wigs; till, in fact, the stock was virtually their own.

“ But never count the terms; once and a million. All my rethoric was thrown away. I might as well have bid the lamb preach to the pitiless wolf! They continued firm to their purpose; and, finding me determined not to abdicate my throne, beckoned to a gentleman, standing hard by, who, touching me on the shoulder, informed me I was his prisoner.

“ Is it even so? Said I; then I defy you stars! Sir, said I to the bailiff, you should be a gentleman; keep off the rabble, that I may entertain my fate with decency. ‘ Will you,’ said one, ‘ ask favour of the Senate?’ Curfed be your Senate! said I, that Jemmy Twitcher should peach me, I own, surprizes me; but ’tis a plain proof that the world is all alike, and that

even our gang can no more trust one another than other people.

“ Oh! said I, take example by this ye managers. Let not the lisp, the smile, nor the rustlings of silks betray your poor heart to women; let not your treasurers accept drafts for you; your wardrobe-keeper run you up with the tradesmen; borrow not your performers' money, nor mortgage your property above four times over; lest your men grow insolent, your women indisposed, lest, instead of your managing the company, the company should manage you; and in the fury of your remorse, you take away what was not yours to give—‘ Have you done,’ said one; ‘ Nay,’ said another, ‘ if you have not, to it again, we'll wait your leisure.’

“ My pretty geniuses finished, by telling me that they had agreed to sell my quondam property, now made over to

them, to the notorious Mr. Linnet, who was in treaty with the mayor of Winchester, for that ancient and learned city. That he had promised to engage them all on handsome shares, and would include me, provided I were inclined to embark in the scheme; but that I must not expect to perform capital parts, as they had Gibbs, Gawdry, and other actors of that description in the company.

“Cromwell, said I to little Dick Douce, a monstrous good fellow, you remember him, Hewit, at Stourbitch, I did not think, in all my miseries, to have shed a tear! but lead me in, take an inventory of all I have to the last penny, it is the company's.

“To make short of my story; after the accounts had been drawn out, and the expences fairly paid, I found myself in the possession of the gross sum of seven pounds, five shillings and fourpence, half-

penny, one coat, two shirts, a pair of stockings, and seven wigs. At such a time to shut me out! I did regret parting from poor Douce. I asked him to correspond with me; 'I can't,' said he; How dye mean can't? You can write letters; 'I don't think I can,' said the poor fellow, 'I have written nothing but orders and promisory notes for these fifteen years.'

"The next freak I took into my head was to be in love. I got an engagement at Stilton, and was fortunate enough to play the principals; Romeo, Old Philpot, and the like. A great brewer's daughter sent me a billet doux; attended the appointment; saw her at the window lamenting her hard fortune to the hard apples and pears in the orchard; settled the plan of elopement; swore to her beauty, Helen and Hero were but hildings and harlots. Got one of her father's dray horses; this, Roan, said I, shall be my throne! mounted the chay cart; bear

me, said I, Bucephalus among the billows!
Off we went, bye dad! hey for Gretna
Green! Wounds we had a power of
crosses upon the road; no putting Dobbin
into a trot; Oh! said I, that I should ex-
pect a horse to run away that never did
any thing but walk!

“ Shall I go on, or have I said
enough? After we had got about three
miles in two hours and a half, spouting
Romeo and Juliet all the way, like two
intriguing ducks in a mill-pond, I heard
the tread of horsemen; and, presently, re-
ceived, my beaver being up, a blow over
the pericranium that felled me to the
earth. Oh, said I, thou cuttest my head
off with a golden ax, and smilest upon the
stroke that murders me!

‘ Ah dom thee!’ said the old father,
for it was him and his myrmidons, ‘ I’ll
murder thee with the devil to thee.’ Thus
we went on. I’ll read you the scene.

"*Papa.* Play a-ling, poaching rascal!"

"*Walmesley.* And must I leave thee Juliet!"

"*Papa.* Doin thee hold thy palaver-ing jaw."

"*Miss.* Our hearts are twined together!"

"*Papa.* I'll untwine them with the devil to you."

"*Walmesley.* Fathers' have flinty hearts."

"*Papa.* Flinty, hey, what to save their girls from ruin?"

"*Miss.* Stand off! or this dagger shall quit my Romeo's hold."

"*Papa.* Dagger! John hold her arms; tye that fellow hand and foot."

"*Walmesley.* Oh cursed, cruel fate!"

"Away they went, bearing off poor Juliet; no tears could move 'em; next morning I was informed that I had better decamp, for the brewer had been with the justice to lay his complaint, who was of opinion I might be taken up for horse stealing."

“ At this hint, I can't say I-spake; for instead of uttering a syllable, I sat off as hard as I could drive. When I came to Wellingborough, I saw a croud, and, presently, found it was occasioned by a Mountebank, who had just ascended his stage. Astonished to see him without a Merry Andrew, I was informed that poor Pickle had broke his thigh at the last town, vaulting the slack rope; but that the Doctor had sent for another famous for mummification, gesticulation, and imitation.

“ Well knowing that this was a pretence to bam the multitude; and being perfectly capable of answering all the quack slang, I called out to make room for *me*, for that *I* was come. The Doctor did not know what to make of this at first; but being satisfied by a flash intimation, or two, he welcomed me by the names of Pickle, Drybones, Screwmuscle, and so on. I jumped upon the stage; and hav-

ing dressed myself in my predecessor's jacket, mummied, gesticulated, and imitated to such a degree, that they threw up their shillings, for the chance of the silver spoon, in great abundance. As to the Doctor, he was so delighted, that he offered to take me into partnership upon the spot.

“ I stayed with him, however, no longer than 'till his Merry Andrew had recovered, exacting no more than my expences, and a reasonable present, to which he generously added, which, he said, might be of service to me, several receipts to counterfeit patent quack medicines. He also recommended me to his friend the manager of a company of comedians at Coventry, who, shortly after, took Stour-bitch fair, at which place I became acquainted, as I suppose you have already heard, with, then my friend, now, alas, my rival, John Hewit.

“ Well, Miss Higgins, after we had escaped from the Philistines, I suppose you are not a stranger to all that happened, from the bear-baiting business to our being cast away upon the coast of Suffex. It was upon the coast of Suffex, was it not Captain? You see, after Hewit and I had escaped in safety from the country boors, we determined that the fortune of one should be the fortune of the other; marry, how! tropically. So, you see, Mrs. Hannah, I don't know how you can do, unless you marry us both.

“ But stay, where was I? Oh! when Hewit and I parted—‘Parted! said I, I understood’—“ Oh yes,” cried Walmesley, “ ’tis very easily understood—Parted! what a stupid fellow I must be; but we who are true lovers, have strange vagaries, I mean met never to part. Brothers, another Gemini; in short, Hewit became Walmesley, and Walmesley became Hewit; for when Hewit went to Bristol, Walmesley—no

that's not it—Walmesley went to Bristol, and Hewit, that is to say, Walmesley, no, Hewit; the Prince found the fisherman, no, I am wrong, the fisherman found the Prince, and Hewit, I mean the fisherman, and then Walmesley, I would say the Prince; no, Hewit, stay, I am wrong, Walmesley—Thus you see the Prince, and Hewit, and Walmesley, and the fisherman, and, and, and now I think I have made the matter perfectly clear."

CHAP. IX.

IN WHICH THE FOREGOING ÆNIGMA IS CLEARED
UP, AND HANNAH HIGGINS IS MARRIED TO JOHN
HEWIT.

HERE my brother and Hewit fell into a hearty fit of laughter at Walmesley's very curious way of clearing the matter up; and told him he never acted better in his life. 'Well, then if that's the case,' said he, 'I suppose I may go and undress—With all my heart, I am glad my part is done so soon.'

Beginning now to see a little into the business; upon my word, said I, you are a pretty fat; but don't you think it was

rather cruel to amuse yourselves at my expence? 'Why, I'll tell you what, Hannah,' said my brother, 'I was determined to be pilot in this business myself. Young girls, in love affairs, you see, generally go to sea without rudder or compass. I had a mind, therefore, to see how the land lay; and this whimsical intermixture of Walmesley and Hewit having happened, I thought it a good opportunity of trying whether you were sailing with a squall that might overset you, or a steady breeze likely to bring you into port.'

I thank you, said I, for your affection, though I could have spared you the trouble of a trial that has intruded on me many disagreeable moments; but any thing to convince my brother, that his sister shall never prove unworthy of him; and now pray, clear as Mr. Walmesley has made this history, I should be glad to have it a little better elucidated.

‘The business,’ said my brother, ‘is no more than this: Hewit and Walmesley finding, or rather fancying, themselves in danger of being pursued, agreed to assume each other’s name; so that from the moment they parted, Hewit became Walmesley, and Walmesley Hewit; and the trick was this: If Hewit should be caught by the name of Walmesley, he might easily prove he was not the man, and so of the other.’

What then, said I to Walmesley, you did not go to sea? ‘Oh yes, I did,’ said Walmesley, ‘can none remember? Yes, I know all must—

“When glory, like a dazzling eagle, stood

“Perched on my beaver in the grannic flood.”

Why, ma’am, as we were riding in latitude ninety-two, gallopping away upon the back of the Isle of Wight, just as the mizen peak was furred to the cat head, your brother, amid-ships, running out a

flying jib-boom, and I standing abaft the taffarel—

‘ I wish you had been with us,’ said my brother, ‘ with all my soul, we should have had ten times more fun than we had ; but the fact is, having taken a liking to John Hewit, who I entered aboard by the name of Walmesley ; he generously told me every particular of his love for you, and said, he had certainly rendered himself very unworthy of you ; but that it should be his study, in future, to merit your good opinion.

‘ This added to the service he did me, for you know, Hannah, I love a gallant fellow, induced me to promote him ; but still continued him under the name of Walmesley, both to try your heart, and to avoid any unpleasant explanation with the ship’s company.’

And pray, said I to Hewit, was your

arm in a sling, Mr. Walmesley, by reason of a wound you received under the Fort of Vigo, when you sent that letter? ‘It certainly was,’ said John, ‘but if it had not, I should have got somebody else to have written that express; for, otherwise, you would have known my hand writing.’

Then, said I, I certainly have been very completely deceived; but there is one thing more: What became of the real Mr. Walmesley, under the false name of Hewit, ever since the bear-baiting business, and how came he to bring that letter, and where did you find him? I am anxious to know all this; for now I have no fear of him as a lover, I am extremely pleased with him as an acquaintance.

‘Why,’ said my brother, ‘as I was journeying on to find you here, devilish ill to be sure I was; and among the rest

of my plagues, I had, as Shakespear calls it, a raging tooth; this was at Saxmundham, and asking the landlord whether they had in the neighbourhood an operator that could unship it without carrying away any of my upper works, he told me there was one Doctor Hewit in the town, who performed miracles in that way. That he did eyes, cataracts, palates, and hair lips, cut corns, gave shocks, fumigated, and fomentated; that he was the son of a seventh son, that there was not such a dab, within a hundred miles, at a bursten-child, or a hollow tooth; and that his Turlington, and Daffey, had done wonders; but then, added the landlord, he is mighty soft in other respects; all he gets, the foolish man gives away to the poor.

I was struck with the name, and still more with the character, on which, though he has said nothing of it, Hewit used very

much to enlarge. I recollected, that when he separated from Hewit, he determined to set up in this way, in consequence of having been supplied with proper instructions by the Quack Doctor, to whom he was Merry Andrew at Wellingborough. Nothing, therefore, could get it out of my head but that it was Walmesley himself. I begged he might be sent for. Lord we knew one another in two minutes, like a couple of free-masons. The word, said I, 'Sweet Marjorum,' said the Doctor, 'Pass,' answered I. 'Why now, upon my soul,' said he, 'that is very extraordinary, there never was but one man in the world that I settled that with.' I know it, said I, a namesake of yours; his name was John Hewit. He has betrayed you. You remember the circumstance of stealing the horse at Stilton! Now you see that horse has turned out to be a mare—

"And, says Sir John, the statutes all declare,

"That man must needs be hanged that steals a mare."

‘Come, come,’ said he, ‘you are a good fellow, this will do, landlord, bring some punch. How is he? I love him, the fellow fascinated me, put powder in my drink; I was planet struck. Why, Sir, I had almost consented to face the salt sea and hear the deep mouth cannon, Jove’s thunder’s counterfeit. Oh!’ added he, ‘that villainous salt petre should be dug from the harmless bowels of the earth, that so many brave fellows have laid low.’

‘Well, but stay, how is John? I wish this damned fellow would come with the punch. Here, landlord! Oh, he is as tedious as a tired horse! Come, come, we have got it at last. If you please, Sir, we’ll drink his health. Here he goes; the stupidest fellow for a head, and the finest fellow for a heart in the world; “Here’s may success attend his plot, and Hannah Higgins be his denonement.”’

‘Higgins!’ continued he, ‘What the devil have we got here! Let me twig your buttons—“Success to the Eagle Galley, Thomas Higgins, commander.” Have we not Hiren here? He then told me that he had, that morning, seen my friend the pilot, who had gone upon a little business to Saxmundham, from whom he learnt, not only my story, but that Hewit was safe, and had been passed as a pauper to Wolverhampton, which latter intelligence was news to me.

‘Seeing disguise was totally unnecessary, we fairly unbent; and as I was taken with a violent fever that very night, and unable to proceed, I sent Walmesley forward with proper instructions. I knew perfectly well that Hewit had not betrayed me, and that the presence of Walmesley would properly entangle the plot of our comedy, till I should arrive to manage the denouement, and wind up the catastro-

phe. This is now done, and you have nothing to do, by way of perfecting the resemblance of a drama, but to give your hand to the hero of the piece.

‘And what am I to do,’ said Walmesley; I should have lost my sheep, said I, answering him in his own way, if it had not bleated. ‘Thy fortune shall be my care,’ cried my brother; ‘and while I have a guinea you shall freely command a part of it.’ ‘Why then my golden dream is out,’ said Walmesley; ‘and it shall be realized,’ said my brother, and I wish my fortune was ample enough to indulge you in your *mimic* *plaisirs*, as you call them.’ ‘No more of that if thou lovest me Hall,’ answered Walmesley.

Having now the sanction of my brother’s consent to a marriage with the man I loved, though, I hope, that neither in this instance, nor in any other, I have ever

lost sight of proper feminine delicacy, I will not affect to deny, that I guaranteed my brother's proposal by giving Hewitt my hand freely, and without reserve.

On the following Sunday we became man and wife. Good Parson Williams performed the ceremony, my brother gave me away, Miss Binns and Miss Williams were the bridesmaids, the latter of whom wrote an elegant little poem on the occasion, by way of epithalamium, which Walmesley repeated, after dinner, with good emphasis, and good discretion.

Mr. Smallbrook, and Mr. Gregory, were of the party, and poor Mrs. Crow superintended the kitchen. The little children I had taught on a Sunday, were all feasted; the manufacturers throughout the place, either at my instance, or at the instance of their employers, who had all a respect for me, made a jovial day of it; and, except a sigh to the memory of

Binns, whose health we drank after dinner, which both his sister and I accompanied with a tear, I truly believe that no occasion, be it ever so popular, or so interesting, could have diffused more general joy among all degrees of persons, than did, at Wolverhampton, the union of John Hewit and Hannah Higgins.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.